

THE
FORCE of PREJUDICE,

A
MORAL TALE,

IN
TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

“ — WHO BY REPENTANCE IS NOT SATISFIED

“ IS NOR OF HEAVEN NOR EARTH.”

SHAKESPEARE.

L O N D O N :

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<i>Ibid.</i>

ERRATA. VOL. II,

Page	Line
23	— 2 penult, <i>for</i> "cattle" <i>read</i> "castle."
25	— 3 penult, <i>for</i> "purse" <i>read</i> "pursue."
59	— 5 <i>for</i> "me most" <i>read</i> "to me one of the most."
68	— 4 <i>for</i> "awaked" <i>read</i> "awoke."
78	— 2 <i>for</i> "explanation" <i>read</i> "explanations."
82	— 7 penult, <i>for</i> "rided" <i>read</i> "ridded."
222	— 3 <i>dele</i> "comma" <i>after</i> "must."
261	— 6 <i>dele</i> "his" <i>before</i> "sister."
281	— 10 <i>for</i> "silence" <i>read</i> "silent."
286	— 9 penult, <i>for</i> "grieve" <i>read</i> "wound."
<i>Ibid.</i>	— 6 penult, <i>after</i> "affections" <i>add</i> "before he became "acquainted with her."

THE
FORCE OF PREJUDICE



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CHAP. IX.

Friendship! peculiar boon of heav'n,
The noble mind's delight and pride,
To men and angels only giv'n,
To all the lower world deny'd.

DR. JOHNSON.

THE chaise which carried Erasmus from the two beings he loved best in existence, had arrived at its first stage, before he had perfectly recovered from the poignancy of

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A

those

those feelings, the philosophy of seventeen, had not yet taught him to repress.

Mr. Morgan, the gentleman who attended him as tutor, had once or twice attempted to enter into conversation with him upon general topics, but his mind was too intensely occupied with the idea of the beloved objects he had just quitted, to attend to any subjects less interesting.—His replies were very short, only in monosyllables, and those not in the most pleasant or agreeable tone. Mr. Morgan therefore suffered him to enjoy, without any further molestation, his own gloomy meditations, until the chaise stopped: he then again endeavoured to divert his attention, by engaging him in a ramble to examine the town whilst dinner was preparing. They had not proceeded far, before they were most opportunely relieved by meeting a gentleman with whom Erasmus had formed an acquaintance soon after his first going to College: and which being
founded



founded on mutual esteem—a similarity of tastes—and an eager pursuit of knowledge, promised to become hereafter a friendship of the most strict, and lasting nature, and productive of the highest gratifications, that sentiment is so exquisitely capable of affording.

Mordaunt Williams was nearly five years the senior of Erasmus; but in person Erasmus had the advantage; and in scholastic acquirements they were nearly the equal of each other. For during the time Williams had been learning little more at school than the Greek and Latin languages—Erasmus had been taught by his father—(who devoted nearly the whole of his leisure, to his education, particularly the cultivation of his mind)—to reason—and to study, from that grand volume of universal information open to every inquirer—*The Book of Nature*.

Williams had left the University some months before Erasmus, though without any determined pursuit. His father (who was at the bar) was a man of large property—extensive practice, and of a good family.—Mordaunt was intended by his father for the senate, as soon as an opportunity occurred to procure him a seat: and with a view of introducing him to the patronage of a nobleman—a distant relation—who possessed considerable influence, he had been recalled from College.

Upon his first introduction Mordaunt had obtained a commission in the army, and was now with his regiment at Colchester.

The meeting of these sincere friends was the more welcome, as it had been wholly unexpected; and they all three returned to the inn—where Erasmus and Mr. Morgan had ordered dinner—highly delighted with their good fortune that had thus afforded them
the

the satisfaction of taking a personal leave of each other:—Yet though the truest friendship subsisted between Erasmus and Williams, and both experienced the highest gratification from this accidental meeting, it is a matter of doubt whether Mr. Morgan did not feel an equal degree of happiness, as it relieved him from the irksome situation, of passing his hours in the gloomy silence, and unsocial abstraction, in which Erasmus appeared disposed to indulge. The youth, it is true, he highly esteemed; but he did not feel the separation, or the sorrows of his pupil in quite so poignant a degree, as to prevent his being desirous of participating a little more, of the rational enjoyments of life.

Here the trio spent the remainder of the day together in social converse, and with a considerable degree of cheerfulness: though occasionally, on the part of Erasmus, tinged by melancholy retrospections of the hap-

piness he had quitted, and could not expect again to enjoy for a very long time. At last the friends bade each other adieu—promised to cherish an eternal friendship—and separated for the night.

Mrs. Inglebert and Adelaide passed the remainder of the first day in talking over the virtues—the abilities, and the peculiar excellence each appreciated in the departed object of their equal affections; and by turns wept and smiled, as either recollected some instance of his intellectual superiority; or some circumstance of his philanthropic attention to the distresses of the unfortunate.

In discussing these topics, they partook of the only satisfaction—though a melancholy one—either could enjoy: and Mrs. Inglebert seemed totally to forget the cause which had in fact occasioned his absence, and conversed with her beloved Adelaide upon these

these subjects, as though her sole intention had been directed to procure Erasmus an interest in her regard.

Thus it is, when the heart is greatly affected, and swells with either grief or joy, that we are most desirous of imparting the emotion, and most sensible of the delights of friendship:—then we feel, and appreciate the superior blessing of social, to solitary pleasure. And there are few let us hope, but in those moments must acknowledge, that happiness is infinitely increased by participation—and sorrow deprived of half its poignancy by being uttered: and that the one would sink into vapid indifference; and the other rise to agonizing misery, were either confined within the recesses of our own bosoms, without the possibility of expressing the sensation to a correspondent mind.

Thus

Thus it were with Erasmus and his friend Williams: with Mrs. Inglebert and Adelaide:—And heaven grant its genial influence may extend to every human breast capable of cherishing a joy—or suffering an affliction.

CHAP. X.

Ah! what avails (he said) to trace the springs
That whirl of empire, the stupendous wheel!
Ah, what have I to do with conquering kings,
Hands drench'd in blood, and breasts begirt
with steel!

To those, whom Nature taught to think and feel.
Heroes, alas! are things of small concern.
Could history man's secret heart reveal,
And what imports a heaven-born mind to learn,
Her transcripts to explore, what bosom would
not yearn.

BEATTIE.

IT is unnecessary, and totally foreign to
our purpose, to pursue our Hero from stage
to stage; or enter into a geographical de-
scription of the several kingdoms through
which he travelled. Nor do we intend to
keep

keep a regular journal of every minute particular that occurred during his absence— suffice it here to observe, that though Erasmus had not yet attained his seventeenth year, the seriousness of his disposition and deportment—his understanding—his learning—his peculiar habit of reflecting, reasoning, and deciding—the manliness of his appearance—and the rectitude of his conduct, induced those who did not possess any register of his birth, to conclude him turned of twenty.

The Reader is therefore requested to keep in mind this remark, and to recollect, his father had accustomed him to think, to reason, and to act, long before the time the generality of youth are permitted such an indulgence, or are supposed capable of a deliberate reflection, arising out of a series of propositions, proofs, and deductions, or in fact of attending to the rudiments of metaphysical disquisitions.

His

His early declaration of love must not therefore be ascribed to the fervour of an heated imagination, or considered as any violation of the natural timidity of a youthful passion ; but attributed to the several circumstances of time, place, and situation ; and which, if combined with the peculiar habits above alluded to, will fully account for what might otherwise appear a precipitance of conduct, and a departure from the strictness and simplicity which has hitherto characterised all his actions.

Two years and an half had now elapsed, and the time for Erasmus' return was at last fixed to take place the following Spring ; as it was intended his twentieth birth day should be celebrated at Orlington House with much splendor, by way of introducing him to the notice of the principal gentry in the county, and to the electors generally, as a dissolution of parliament was expected the following sessions, when it was his uncle's intention to endeavour

deavour to get him returned for the county, in the hope of reserving the whole of his borough influence for other members, and consequently of extending his own with administration.

It was now his Lordship thought proper to speak more decisively his wishes and intentions—for though he had passed more than twenty months entirely with his nephew—had introduced him to his cousin, and exerted—as much as his irritable disposition would suffer him—all the means in his power to conciliate his good opinion and affections, he had hitherto preserved a perfect silence with regard to his views, or the real motives which, upon this occasion, actuated his conduct—wisely, for once, considering, that a young man of the disposition of Erasmus, was much more likely to become attached to his cousin, and thereby subservient to his views, unfettered by any previous conditions, than if acquainted with the nature and extent
of

of the respective services, expected to be performed, as the consideration for the splendid advantages which were to follow an acquiescence with all his Uncle's ambitious projects.

To gratify this new desire, contemplated with all the eager delights of youthful expectation—his Lordship thought no sacrifice too great:—nor any means—however contemptible—to be neglected, by which he could accomplish this his now sole and favorite pursuit.

But Erasmus, though an adept in science, and that kind of knowledge calculated to make man happy, wise, and good: was wholly deficient in those versatile recommendations—his uncle with the most disinterested intentions—was extremely desirous he should acquire.

The only political principles he had ever as yet avowed, were too limited; and too patriotic to answer the purposes his Lordship had in view. He loved his country with the most enthusiastic zeal—esteemed her constitution the noblest, and the best, that human wisdom could invent—loved his king—revered the laws—and idolized the trial by jury—but then he thought her domestic tranquillity much better secured by the arts of peace—than the arts of war—and the purity of her civil administration of greater consequence, than the extension of her empire—whilst his Lordship cared not a rush, or gave himself the trouble of a thought about either the one or the other—unless they forwarded his own ambitious schemes of personal aggrandisement.

The political—the social—and the moral principles which influenced the conduct of Erasmus, were all directed to increase the happiness of his fellow mortal here—and to promote

promote his eternal felicity hereafter. And though of a disposition which inclined him to conciliate the good opinion of every one not absolutely depraved, he could never condescend to express the contemptible politeness, which rather than displease, will appear to acquiesce with the views of the vicious. *His* politeness was from the heart—and consisted in a real desire to serve and please, as long as either could be done consistent with the superior demands of truth and justice; and whenever he expressed himself, it was in the genuine language of sincerity, though in this age for refinement of behaviour—exploded as the romance of youth—the effects of religious enthusiasm—the craft of designing hypocrisy—or the blunt unpolished manners of a neglected education.

The views and intentions of Lord Orlington with regard to Erasmus, (and to which we have alluded as being expressed with more precision) his Lordship one day after dinner

prefaced by observing :—"The time is hastily approaching, nephew, designed for our return to England—the knowledge you have acquired by travelling, you will, I trust, soon have an opportunity of displaying to advantage, in one of the most dignified situations an Englishman can possibly aspire to.—I mean that of a senator legislating for his country. My intention of bringing you into parliament you are already acquainted with : and I hope to see the time when your abilities, as a statesman and an orator, shall be equally acknowledged, and be employed in exposing the sophistical delusions of the enemies of your country."

This artful exordium drew from Erasmus the warmest declaration of attachment to the interest and happiness of his country : and the strongest assurance, that in whatever situation he could benefit, or best exert his endeavours for her advantage and prosperity, he

he should deem the most fortunate of his life.

This declaration so highly gratified his uncle, that he embraced him with the greatest pleasure, concluding his own views were in consequence established beyond the probability of a disappointment.

He then inquired of Erasmus what he thought of his cousin Henrietta.—Erasmus not supposing his uncle had any particular design in asking this question, further than the fond partiality of a parent to hear the praises of his child—replied in a style of panegyric so warm and animated—and expressed himself so infinitely indebted to the liveliness of her disposition for many of his happiest moments—that his lordship concluded him an age in love, and that all thoughts of Adelaide—if he ever entertained any—were now finally at an end.

This so highly delighted his Lordship, that he proceeded further to disclose his designs—declaring that it would be Erasmus's own fault, if he were not the most fortunate of men—that he already regarded him as a son—and that in case he continued to merit his protection he would give him Henrietta, and leave every shilling of his immense property to them at his death. That the patent for creating him an earl he expected would shortly pass the great seal, and that this title he would take proper care should be made so as to descend to him and his heirs.

This was all expressed so rapidly, and his Lordship felt so perfectly satisfied with the whole of Erasmus's conduct, and the justness of his own conclusions—that the surprise visible on the countenance, and the exclamation which followed on the part of Erasmus, his lordship attributed to joy at finding himself so suddenly permitted to indulge the flattering prospects of greatness, he
had

had thus unexpectedly unfolded to his view, and not to that of anguish, at finding himself likely to be involved in a labyrinth of difficulties from his uncle's too affectionate intentions—and which he attributed to the most liberal and generous of motives.

Dissimulation formed no part of the character of Erasmus—he would therefore instantly have undeceived his uncle with regard to his affections and the object of them—and was about to have done so, when he was prevented by the arrival of company.

Baron de Maltzan and Count Kasemirskoi were announced, and immediately entered.—Conversation now took a general turn—the account of the victory of the Russians over the Turks at Ismail, which had only been received officially by the count that morning, was related with all its circumstantial particulars, and all its attendant horrors.

The

The count's description was delivered in a tone of such rapturous exultation, and the indiscriminate massacre which followed, defended by him as absolutely necessary—that Erasmus, whose feelings were all alive to the miseries of his fellow creature, could not restrain the exclamation which burst spontaneously from his lips of—“God of mercy! can it be possible? And if so, can political, or any motives, justify such a barbarous procedure?—Surely, surely the account must be exaggerated!—What! 30,000 human beings cut to pieces in one day?—And is it possible, Count, you can feel the satisfaction you have expressed?”

Lord Orlington frowned at Erasmus—told him he was a foolish boy.—Apologized to the Count for the intemperate warmth of his nephew, and the interruption it had occasioned in his narrative; and requested him to proceed.

The

The Count chose first to answer Erasmus.

This he did by observing—"It was very natural to rejoice in the successes of ones own country, and the destruction of her enemies. And pray, Sir, (continued the Count to Erasmus) pray, Sir, would *you* not feel an equal satisfaction, were *your* nation to obtain so signal, so splendid an advantage over her foes; and express some degree of disapprobation at the conduct of that man, who should first stop to investigate the number, or idly to lament the slain, before he paid the tribute of applause due to the valour of the brave defenders of their country."

"That I have so much local prejudice about me (replied Erasmus) as to love my own country superior to all others—and to wish to see her exalted in the estimation of the whole habitable globe, I will not attempt to deny.—I have been taught to consider, and cherish this, as a virtuous sentiment.—

That

That I would shed the last drop of my blood in defence of that dear country, were she attacked by any foe, will not, I trust, be deemed unmeaning declamation. But if I could take part in, or applaud the conquest even of my own nation, that was obtained by the extirpation of 30,000 of her enemies, in such a manner, and attended with such circumstances of sanguinary cruelty, I should consider myself as unworthy the existence I possess—and as highly culpable in the sight of my God, as though I were to commit so many individual murders, for which human laws would judge and punish me.

“ Oh! I would not be the man who should plunge but one province in the miseries of war, though millions of worlds were to be my reward!

“ Think but for a moment of the happy situation of a country in the hour of calm security. Look at her cultured fields, waving
with

with the rich gifts of harvest. Her fertile vallies—her crouded cities, thronged with the busy sons of commerce. See her husband-men tilling the ground—and her shepherds attending their flocks; each enjoying the treasure of his labour, and the reward of his industrious toil. Behold the smiling mothers—the happy fathers—their joyous children; and all the relations of life equally participating the felicity; and equally grateful for the inestimable blessings they enjoy.—O peace! lovely peace! Such are the advantages following in thy train, and such the superior pleasures thine influence diffuses around.

“But now view the scene reversed.

“Look at yonder plain, where the dead and the dying lay in one promiscuous heap.—Then carry your attention forward to that row of cottages—those trees—and yon cattle, all smoaking in ruins. The fields which
promised

promised such an abundant harvest trampled under feet—the vallies late so beauteous to the eye, all deformed—the husbandmen and the shepherds left without either land to till, or sheep to attend. Commerce no longer busy—nor industrious toil any longer rewarded. The husband torn from his wife—the father from his children—the children bereft of parents; and the virgins violated; the relations of life destroyed—and the aged and the feeble—grey-headed—motionless and mute—with eyes and hands raised to heaven, which—could they find words for utterance—would imprecate for vengeance on the cruel spoiler, or implore protection for themselves;—now left to witness the common ravage, and in a little time the triumphs of the conquerors. These are the exploits of heroes—of the great—the glorious—who vanquish empires, and acquire kingdoms—who——”

A ser-

A servant hastily entered—said a messenger had just arrived from England with letters of importance; which he delivered and retired.

Lord Orlington opened the packet, and found among others, one containing an account that Mrs. Inglebert was dangerously ill, and desired the immediate return of Erasmus: this his Lordship communicated.

The ardour of the patriot, and the universal benevolence of the philanthropist—were lost in the still stronger feelings of the son: and Erasmus hastened to fulfil the desires of his mother, by instantly preparing for his return to England—which, in company with his uncle and cousin, he began early the following morning.

Here we shall leave them to pursue their journey, and look back upon Mrs. Inglebert and Adelaide.

CHAP. XI.

“ The joys of meeting pay the pangs of absence,
Else who could bear it ? ”

Rowe.

THEY had passed their time rather heavily ; for though Erasmus had never suffered a single post to elapse without writing, yet to both, his absence was a deprivation, for which neither the society of their friends, nor the ordinary amusements of life could at all compensate.

The friendship and attention of Sir John and Lady Griffiths, were continued with the most kind and anxious solicitude : and the friendly endeavours of an accomplished young lady (a Miss Caroline Rolleston, niece of this worthy couple, and about the age of Adelaide) were incessantly exerted to divert the melancholy, but too visible, on the countenance of both.

These

These endeavours, though generally successful whilst the parties were together—but too frequently lost their efficacy as soon as Mrs. Inglebert and Adelaide were alone, as they indulged their hours of seclusion from the world in conversation upon this inexhaustible topic—the regard each considered Erasmus so justly entitled to.

Yet notwithstanding Mrs. Inglebert so anxiously desired the return of Erasmus—her own wishes for that event would have remained unexpressed, had not her illness, as above-mentioned, been really of an alarming nature, and occasioned by circumstances similar to those which terminated the existence of her beloved husband—a putrid fever caught in an attendance upon a sick family.

Erasmus, after the first stage, travelled alone; for his impatience to embrace his mother, and his apprehension lest she should be no more ere he reached England, so

wholly occupied his thoughts, and agitated his mind, that he could neither think, nor converse upon any other subject.—This so discomposed the more philosophic temper of Lord Orlington, whose affection for his sister was not the most unbounded, that he at last consented Erasmus and Mr. Morgan should proceed post—and that himself and Henrietta should perform the remainder of the journey by easier stages.

We must pass over, in silence, the particulars which attended the meeting between Mrs. Inglebert, Adelaide, and Erasmus, as language can but faintly express the transports of three persons, whose every thought was in a manner centered in each other.—Suffice it to say—they were happy—almost too happy for human existence.

Erasmus found his mother in much better health than he expected, and his Adelaide!—But in what language shall we attempt

tempt to describe the vast ineffable transports which filled his bosom, when, after nearly three years of absence, he returned, and found the mistress of his affections superior in personal attractions and intellectual charms of mind, to every female he had yet conversed with—superior to the little artifices of her sex—and superior alike to disguise or deceit. She received him with all the chaste affection—the modest tenderness of a sister; and conversed with him, with all the dignity of virtue:—and never, in a word, a thought, or an action of her life, had she occasion to blush at the recollection of having departed, though but for a moment, from that strict rectitude of conduct, which is the pride, glory, and perfection of the female character.

This let me assure my readers is no—
“faultless monster which the world ne’er
saw,” or fictitious character from imagination—but an humble copy of a still fairer
c 3 original,

original, whom we have yet among us to animate the virtuous in their exertions, or to shame the vicious from their mad career.—She lives, a bright example of existing virtue.

Yet Adelaide suffered some of the weakness of her sex, and some of the prejudices of education to govern her conduct, in one particular instance, which involved herself and friends in the most poignant distress; but that very weakness proceeded from so amiable a motive, and those prejudices were so nearly allied to virtue, that few could blame, though all lamented the indecision that had nearly proved fatal to the happiness of three of the most deserving objects in existence.

Mrs. Inglebert, from the moment of Erasmus's return, visibly recovered; and Adelaide, when alone, wept from excess of pleasure—a pleasure too vast for utterance, and to be perfectly sensible of, the heart must have

have first experienced the misery, the anguish of separation and absence :—must have been reunited to the beloved object of its regard—and know that object to be as equally deserving of every tender, affectionate sentiment, as before the separation took place.—Those who have felt all this, can form some idea of the sensations which now so delightfully agitated the bosoms of Mrs. Inglebert, Adelaide, and Erasmus.

It should have been mentioned, that when Mrs. Inglebert found herself so greatly indisposed as to think it necessary to send a messenger to Germany—she had been in London about a week, upon business of importance, and had persuaded Adelaide to accompany her, for the purpose of introducing her into some of the fashionable circles, and letting her enjoy the amusements of the metropolis.

Here

Here they still remained when Erasmus arrived.

Mordaunt Williams was likewise at this time in London, and, with his mother and sister, had paid every attention to Mrs. Inglebert and Adelaide, previous to the return of Erasmus, that were within their power.

This greatly increased the regard Erasmus entertained for his friend; and they now seldom suffered a day to pass without their spending some part of it together.

CHAP. XII.

I'll give thee misery; for here she dwells.

Rowe.

ONE morning about a week after the arrival of Erasmus—his friend Williams called, he said, to take breakfast with him, and to relate a scene he had the previous evening been witness to, of such complicated misery, as had exceeded every idea his imagination could have conceived of brutality on the one part, and extreme wretchedness on the other.

These particulars he related in the following words:—"Passing through one of those narrow buildings eastward of St. George's Fields,

Fields, my ears were suddenly assailed by the most piteous moans, and dismal shrieks I ever heard uttered; they apparently proceeded from one, or more females in distress,—I stopt,—looked about, and soon directed my steps to the habitation from whence I supposed they came: before I ventured further, I paused to consider whether some snare might not be designed to entrap the unwary passenger; but humanity quickly got the better of caution, when I heard a voice in the most plaintive accents beseeching some one to have pity on the miserable situation of a disconsolate parent, whose life probably could not be prolonged another hour, and whom misfortunes, he well knew, had alone incapacitated from discharging the demands he had against her.—“What’s that to me?—you know it’s your own fault; you must have behaved civil to Sir William, and then all would have been right,” replied a surly voice.

My

My hand was upon the knocker, for the purpose of inquiring in what manner I could alleviate the afflictions thus pathetically lamented by the one, and so singularly replied to by the other—when a most violent exclamation burst from the lips of a person seemingly in an agony of passion—“ Damnation ! mention not Sir William ! his very name fills my soul with terrors beyond what a prison could inspire ! may the Eternal blast his purposes, and—but (softening his tones) but my Augusta what can be done ? How shall we dispose of our heart broken parent ? The demands of justice can neither be delayed, nor evaded—decide, my sister—decide, quickly before I am torn from you, but do not despair ; let us trust, firmly trust, in the protection of that Almighty Power, who has promised to defend the cause of the widow, and the orphan.—Do not give way to useless unavailing complaints—nor longer supplicate a wretch, whose bosom is callous to every feeling of humanity—who could
with

My

with apathy at first hear our dear unhappy mother plead as though her eternal happiness had depended on the issue; who could behold her in speechless agony—in convulsive terrors—and not recede from his cruel purposes—who can now look upon her—can see her thus insensible—bereft of reason, and not relent! thou reptile! did not thy present powerful protection screen thee from my vengeance, I would tread thee to atoms!”—This voice was here interrupted by the former dessonant one, who exclaimed—“Officers, do your duty, away with him.” I did not stop to hear any more, but applied my hand so forcibly to the knocker, as to gain immediate entrance, when I beheld! My God! a scene that for a few seconds fixed me motionless.—A young man chaffing the temples of an elderly lady, who was struggling in strong hysteric fits, his knee bent, and his arm circling her waist—a young lady who appeared about five or six and twenty, rather handsome, but very plainly dressed, was on the

the other side, administering hartshorn and water, and endeavouring to revive the beloved object of their most affectionate attention—a beautiful infant of about four years of age clung to, and hid her little face bathed in tears in the folds of the young lady's robe, from whence, sobbing, she every now and then turned her little, but expressive eyes upon the company—whilst four men stood waiting, (as I afterwards found,) to convey the gentleman to a prison."

"I at last stammered out an apology, but not before I had been repeatedly asked my business.—I said, turning to the gentleman, the altercation I have overheard, passing your door, has induced me to intrude, in the hope of being of service—tell me, Sir, in what manner, I can best assist these, the objects of your solitudes?"

"And who are you, Sir? (he rather haughtily answered) are you come an instrument of

that villain Sir William ; but know, Sir, I am not so easily to be deceived, or inclined to become the dupe of any further artifice, be assured of that, Sir."

"I know not, I replied, the person to whom you allude,—humanity, and humanity only, has occasioned me to appear thus officious—I again repeat, if I can be of service to you, inform me how it is to be done, and you shall find me disposed to exert my best endeavours to extricate depressed worth, from the rude assaults of law-empowered tyranny."

"The gentleman examined me with a scrutinizing eye, and was silent;—this pause, the wretch to whom I found, upon further conversation, the house to belong, thought favorable, and accosted me with—"

"I don't know what business you have to interfere with other folk's affairs,—or who you are that comes bolt into one's own house,

house, and axes impertinent questions.—
man't I turn him out, officers."

"I gave the brute a look of contempt—and again turned to the wretched sufferers—in-treated them to accept of my services, and to be assured no motives but those the most pure actuated my conduct. I acquainted them with my name—situation in the army—my relative connections, and begged them to repose a confidence in my honor.—After some further conversation, the gentleman informed me he was a lieutenant in the navy—his name Devereux—that the lady in fits was his mother, the other female his sister, and the child his niece, that misfortunes he could not then relate, had reduced his family from affluence, to the abject situation I saw them in—that a concerted scheme had been agreed on between their landlord (who at first appeared greatly attached to them) and Sir William Clementson, who had designs on his sister (here the lady

seemed very much agitated)—that twenty-seven pounds being due for board and lodging, their landlord about a month before, had threatened unless his bill was discharged to turn them all into the streets—to prevent which, he had become responsible, by giving his note at one month's date for the whole, which became due the day before—that for some time past his mother and sister, during his absence from home, had frequently been insulted by the visits of this Sir William, who, by the connivance of the landlord, had gained admittance to their apartment—that the evening before having been absent a short time, Sir William had obtruded his company upon them, and after exhausting all his rhetoric to induce his sister to reside with him, finding it powerless, had recourse to the most audacious and impertinent freedoms, even in the presence of his mother—that whilst struggling to free herself from his base designs—he (the brother) entered, and, in a paroxism of
of

of rage, caught Sir William by the collar, and threw him down the whole flight of stairs—that the consequence was, in the fall, Sir William broke his arm, and dislocated his collar bone—had been pronounced in danger by his surgeon—had obtained a warrant to apprehend him—and that two of the men then present, were constables waiting to take him before a magistrate for the assault ; but in case he should be able to clear himself from the charge by relating the several circumstances that had occasioned it, or to procure bail ; the other two men attended, at the suit of the landlord, with a writ to arrest him for thirty pounds and upwards—that his mother at first humbled herself to the very dust—had supplicated, in the most moving language, the humanity of the landlord to compassionate their afflictions—had offered, would he give up the idea of the arrest, to deposit in his hands a miniature of her late husband's, set with diamonds of great value : “ the last sacred gift remaining

of former fortunes, (said the lieutenant) given and received with the most solemn assurance never whilst life remained to part from it"—this, after taking into his hands to view, the landlord had detained under the pretence of getting a friend to ascertain its intrinsic worth, saying, if as valuable as described, he would wait until such time as he could obtain monies from his agent to discharge all demands, but soon after exultingly introduced the constables, observing—that as he (the son) was likely to go to jail and be hanged, he should keep the picture for his own debt—and that the whole gang of them should troop it, for that he would no longer keep his house for beggars to live in :—this latter threat he was actually on the point of putting in force, when his mother agonized and distracted by her fears for his personal safety, the idea of perishing in the streets; and the calamities his sister and their little darling must endure; on her knees (but from which abject situation I instantly snatched her to my

my throbbing bosom, said the lieutenant with much animation and expressive vehemence) on her knees endeavoured to soften the obdurate, inhuman determination of this unfeeling wretch, but in vain, and who seemed to take a savage pleasure in the wretchedness he witnessed:—that overpowered by such an accumulation of heavy afflictions, and the terrifying prospects before her, she at last sunk into the dreadful hysteric state in which I then saw her, and in which situation he supposed she must have been more than half an hour—that it was with the utmost difficulty his sister had been preserved from a similar state, and that only by the humanity of the officers, and their assuring her they would not remove him till their mother was some-what better, if she would exert herself to support the scene, and contribute to her recovery—that the child had been in fits, but restored by the kind attention and care of one of the sheriff's officers: such (said Williams) were the complicated

complicated distresses I found this wretched family enduring—and such the poignant sufferings of their mind, that had a kingdom been at my disposal, and it would have rescued them, I would have sacrificed it with pleasure for the purpose.—He continued—”

“ During the intervals of our conversation, I got one of the four men to go for a couple of bottles of wine, well knowing nothing could be accomplished without a continuance of their civility, and at the same time entreating him to procure some medical assistance, as the poor lady continued in a most dreadful state—frequently shrieking in so terrifying a manner, as must have alarmed the neighbourhood, and requiring the united strength of four of us, to prevent her dashing herself to pieces.”

“ Upon my looking into my pocket book, I found I had there notes to the amount of fifty pounds, besides some loose cash in my
purse,

purse, I therefore demanded of the landlord to produce the picture, with the note he held for the debt; and which, with the costs, I was ready to discharge."

"The lieutenant hesitated—looked at me, and then at his helpless family—seemed in doubt whether to accept of my proffered services or not; and at last demanded, by every thing sacred, I would declare the real motive for my interfering."

"Without hesitation, I most solemnly invoked the utmost malediction of Heaven upon my devoted self, if any design or sinister motive governed my conduct upon this occasion; and added, I would take his note at six months for the money advanced—that the other bill should be destroyed in the presence of the whole party, and that I would accompany him to a magistrate, and see what could be done in the other affair."

These

“These assurances overcame his scruples—though gratitude appeared now to agitate his frame in so violent a manner, as entirely to deny him utterance; and it was only by forcing his attention to the situation of his mother, that we prevented him from expressing his feelings by actions more forcible than language—the poor lady still continued insensible, though the medical gentleman whom the officer had brought in with him, had administered every specific the faculty are in the habit of prescribing upon these occasions:—at last, with much difficulty, the lieutenant articulated—“may the God of heaven bless and reward you! we cannot! I accept with gratitude your generous interposition, and though I can neither express, nor ever hope to repay your goodness, yet the fervent prayers of my poor distracted parent, if she ever recovers—of my unfortunate but grateful sister, shall, with mine, be directed to heaven, to supplicate
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the God of mercy to shield *you* from all calamities, and bless you with all good!"

"He looked towards the heaven he mentioned, and extending his hand (which I pressed with a fervency not inferior to his own) drew mine towards his bosom, without uttering a word."

"Augusta (whom for the future I shall distinguish by no other appellation) gave me a look—but such a look—so expressive—it entered in at my eye, but went directly to my heart."

"The little angel too, who seemed to watch and understand the countenance of her fair protectress, when she heard the sentiments her uncle expressed, saw his hand extended to press mine, and witnessed the look directed towards me by Augusta, ran from the shelter of her robe, and catching hold of the skirt of my coat, with the most captivating
naiveté,

naiveté, exclaimed—"and little Emma will pray too, and God Almighty always hears good little girls, mamma says—don't he, mamma? And Emma will love you dearly, and so will grandmamma when she wakes—but grandmamma did so frighten her Emma, when that naughty man made her fall down, and then she did so cry and scream, that poor Emma cried too, and went to sleep—but Emma waked again—grandmamma will wake again, won't she, Sir—and then I am sure she'll love you, because uncle loves you, and mamma loves you, and her own dear Emma loves you—won't she, mamma?" and the little dear ran back to obtain a confirmation of her innocent prattle from Augusta, who, in the attitude of bending over her parent (who now laid motionless upon a sofa supported by her son and the gentleman whose assistance we had procured—though she scarcely breathed, and but for her pulse we could not have been assured she existed) kissed her darling; and faintly

faintly said, "yes my love!" and burst into tears."

The child thinking some additional calamity occasioned them to flow, wept, and sobbed out, "if you cry mamma, poor, poor Emma will die!"

"Augusta took the child in her arms, pressed her to her bosom—appeared to put up a mental prayer—smiled through her tears—again kissed the infant, sat her down, and returned to continue her endeavours to recover her wretched parent."

"I went towards the child, caressed and pressed her little cheek (yet wet with the tears the beautiful Augusta had shed over her) to mine, kissed off the precious drops, and mentally entreated heaven to bless both parent and child."

“ By this time, the landlord with much reluctance, had produced the miniature and the bill, with the additional charges subsequent to that account being delivered—which, with the costs then incurred, made the whole amount to thirty-eight pounds.”

“ After making the sheriff's officer a proper compliment for his trouble, and assuring him that every demand should be satisfied as though the lieutenant had gone to his house for the night, he went to search the office whether there were any other detainer, or whether they might with safety discharge him from the action.—He quickly returned with the proper instrument for that purpose, and found us all rejoicing at the restoration of the invalid to life and comparative happiness ;—for, upon her recovery, she had been made acquainted with the alteration that had taken place in their affairs, and the happy consequences likely to ensue from so unexpected an interposition.”

“ We

“ We then adjourned to the room hitherto appropriated to their own individual use, and over a cheerful glass concerted measures for the approaching scene at the justices, as it was still necessary the lieutenant should appear there—yet from the relation of the constables, we gathered that Sir William’s life was not in that imminent danger as to occasion a deprivation of liberty to my friend, at least they did not apprehend that any one would make affidavit of such being the case, but at all events we could press the surgeon daily to declare, whether the danger continued or not.”

“ This point settled, we began to turn our thoughts to other matters not less important.”

“ The lieutenant mentioned his apprehensions, lest Sir William should have apprised a particular person to whom he knew he was indebted, of the intention of his being ar-

rested; and declared the consequences would still be dreadful, should that person just now increase his difficulties, as he could only then look forward to perpetual imprisonment: being aware that other detainers would as soon as it were known he was in custody, be lodged against him, to a very considerable amount.—The only solace to this idea was, that his mother and sister would still have a home, and had found a friend.”

“ As the landlord was the only likely person to give us information of the views of Sir William, I suggested we had better invite him up; but the lieutenant’s feelings revolted at the idea of associating for a moment with a wretch who had nearly occasioned his mother’s death;—however I overruled his objections, and pointed out the advantages we might derive from his evidence, or the information we might draw from him, and that it was more prudent to endure his company an hour, than afford him

him the opportunity of conveying intelligence of the late transactions to Sir William, whose disappointment would be increased, when he found they had not only gained a friend, but frustrated his machinations."

"I therefore went down to this man just as he had put on a great coat to leave the house, and requested a little conversation with him.—I said I should suppose his regard for Sir William had induced him to be more rigid than he otherwise would have been, and to countenance proceedings he must now see were improper—that my friends would still reside with him some time longer, and whatever expences were incurred, I would see him paid; but as I was still a stranger to him, should he not consider my security sufficient, I would procure him the most undeniable."

"He said he was perfectly satisfied with mine alone, and was very sorry for what
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had happened, but that he had been dreadfully pressed to make up bills, &c."

"I invited him to forget the past in a bumper of wine, which he consented to; and upon entering the apartments of those he had before so grossly abused, began a variety of the most abject apologies for his conduct, which being admitted, things passed off pretty well: and as the magistrates were not to meet until six o'clock, we still had half an hour good, which we spent cheerfully over an additional bottle of wine in apparent good humour with each other."

"At last the constables arose and requested our attendance, as the time was arrived for their appearance at the office.—My friend and self prepared to depart; when another scene, almost as affecting as the past, took place between the lieutenant and his mother: the bare idea of his being obliged, though but for a single night, to endure
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the confinement of a prison, and associate with felons, without being guilty of any crime, and but for defending his sister's honor, agonized the feelings of the wretched mother, and weeping sister: and it was with the utmost difficulty the lieutenant retained sufficient fortitude to soothe his suffering relatives into that state of composure, as to prevail with them to submit patiently to his leaving the house."

"I exerted my utmost endeavours to tranquillize their minds, and promised to procure him bail if possible; and that at all events I would see to, and pledge myself for the proceedings being conducted with fairness and impartiality; and should he be committed, I would take care he had every comfort and enjoyment the place would afford.

"These assurances, and the hope of his speedy return, in some degree relieved them from the dreadful apprehensions they had entertained

tertained of his experiencing the treatment of a felon."

"At last we proceeded to the scene of action,—and as I did not think it prudent to lose sight of the landlord for a single moment, I prevailed with him to accompany us."

"Upon our appearance, and the matter being properly investigated, the magistrate would have discharged the lieutenant upon bail, but the surgeon, contrary to our expectations, made affidavit that Sir William's life was in the most imminent danger, and that he had every symptom of a violent fever. This was decisive, and my friend stood committed."

"We hurried to the prison with the utmost dispatch, in order that I might return to disclose the result to his mother and sister, who would, we expected, feel more sensibly
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this privation, than in reality there was any occasion for."

"At the prison we found gold had not lost its accustomed influence, and the lieutenant was accommodated with every thing (liberty excepted) he could have desired."

"But the severest trial still remained to be encountered, for when I returned to the apartments of the mother alone, and they found the object for whose safety they were most solicitous, really deprived of liberty, I had very little hopes the life of either could have been preserved, and had not the gentleman whose assistance we had procured, (and who had politely waited my return) been present, I am persuaded the most dreadful consequences would have ensued—but having prepared himself for the worst—he had a powerful medicine ready to administer, which proved efficacious, and preserved the unhappy sufferers from experiencing a total depri-

deprivation of reason ; though for a considerable time I almost despaired of seeing this accomplished."

" The mother wrung her hands and exclaimed in all the bitterness of woe—" She had buried his father—she had seen their property seized on by ruffians, and the whole of their substance taken from them—she had been long familiar with poverty and affliction, had calmly waited the approaches of expected famine—and had patiently submitted herself to the dispensations of providence: but this last, this cruel blow, bereft her at once of every comfort—of every hope—her child torn from her, and dragged to a noisome prison, to suffer every calamity a wretch—who had blasted the happiness of her family could devise, or by the means of his wealth procure to be inflicted."

" At this allusion to Sir William, I thought indeed the heart of Augusta (who
was

was then standing near me) would have burst its mortal prison, for never did I witness such frantic grief and rage, as now agitated her bosom—though she otherwise appeared me most gentle of her sex.—She suddenly started from a state of insensibility in which she had continued so long, as greatly to alarm me lest it should terminate in mental derangement—and in the most vehement and rapid manner, accused herself with bringing—shame, disgrace, and infamy, upon all she held dear or sacred in existence : but—with a wild and haggard look she exclaimed—“ but I, who have thus heaped misery and destruction upon my devoted family ; who have destroyed the peace of my parent, and occasioned the imprisonment of my brother, will now terminate the scene, nor longer live to augment their sufferings : when I am dead, the merciless monster who with insatiable cruelty has thus plunged us all in woe, may relent ;—may be satisfied in having exposed me to the scorn and reproach of the world—and
the

the stings of my own conscience—he will then surely cease to persecute my dear unhappy mother—my unoffending brother ; and this—(and she here caught at a dirk her brother had formerly worn when a midshipman) and this shall settle every account !”

“ Her mother, (whose countenance had undergone a variety of alterations during the time she had been speaking, but who seemed incapable of moving) when she saw her hand upraised to the dagger—sprung forward—uttered a most piercing shriek, and fell at the feet of her daughter.”

“ You may suppose I had not been an inattentive spectator of the scene—but as I found it was in vain to endeavour to sooth or reason them into composure, I remained silent, though anxiously watching for a favorable opportunity to interfere, when it should appear best calculated to answer my wishes. I therefore first seized the intended
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instrument of destruction, before her hand had quite obtained its purpose, and the action of her mother, drew off her attention in a moment from the poignancy of her former feelings, to the lifeless situation of her parent, which produced the happiest effect, as she seemed not only to return to reason and recollection, but from the quick transition her feelings had undergone, the extreme perturbation of her spirits appeared in a great measure to have subsided."

"The apothecary administered an additional quantity of the before mentioned powerful anodyne, to the mother, and after a considerable time spent in endeavours we restored her to life; though the shock her feelings had thus severely sustained, appeared wholly to have absorbed her faculties, and to have shook reason from her throne."

"Her look was vacant—her questions unconnected

connected; and her replies foreign to the subject."

"Augusta struggled not to notice this change, but to appear calm and composed;—nay evidently wished to acquire sufficient fortitude to be of service to her parent—seemed to credit the apothecary's assertion, that her present state was occasioned by the narcotic infusion, he had been induced to administer in the hopes of producing the happiest consequences; but I evidently saw all was but struggle, and greatly feared I should shortly behold her in the same state."

"I therefore — with the apothecary — advised that the mother should be conveyed to bed, and we immediately sent for a person to sit up with her; by whose assistance our desire was effected, and we were soon informed she had according to the hopes of the apothecary dropped into a slumber, though
that

that was more of a disturbed dozing, than real sleep."

"I then requested Augusta to leave her mother's apartment, and favour us with her company in the front room a few minutes; which she complied with, and we entered into some conversation upon the probability of a speedy restoration of her mother's health, and her brother's presence."

"She expressed much gratitude for our exertions, but appeared extremely languid and exhausted."

"During a momentary absence of Augusta the apothecary and myself agreed, that he should remain in the apartment of the mother, whilst I endeavoured to sooth Augusta with hopes into some degree of composure; and that if I could effect this point, he would afterwards prevail with her to swallow a few drops of the before mentioned medicine, by which

means he hoped to procure some hours sleep which might restore her mind to its proper tone; but that in her present agitated state, he was fearful of administering the draught, lest it should have a contrary effect."

"Upon her return he quitted us under pretence of observing what effect his medicine produced on her mother; and I immediately, though cautiously, entered upon my office."

"I advanced all the arguments I was capable of, and as delicately as possible, assured her I would procure them friends—that I would on the morrow introduce my own mother and sister to their acquaintance, whom I was confident would rejoice, and be proud of the opportunity of serving them;—that I would steadily continue every office of friendship in my power to her brother, and made no doubt of very shortly obtaining him a ship, if not promotion in his profession;

profession; and encouraged her to hope, and look forward to happier prospects."

"These assurances frequently produced a modest blush, which crimsoned her cheek from the idea I suppose of obligation, as she several times observed—they possessed no means of ever repaying such goodness, and which they could scarcely expect from a stranger."

"But when I mentioned my intention of introducing my mother and sister, and that under the shelter of their protection they would be secure from all invidious remarks, every expression of gratitude seemed inadequate to convey her thanks; indeed for some seconds she was silent—then poured forth her acknowledgments—pressed my hand—suddenly recollected herself—blushed at what she conceived an impropriety, and at last burst into tears:—the happiest omen of returning serenity."

“ I now exerted all the eloquence I was master of, and which the occasion inspired; painted in strong colours the happiness likely to result to my family from this unexpected addition to their society—the pleasure they would receive in being able to contribute to the ease and comfort, of friends, I was sure they had only to know, to love and tenderly appreciate; and by dwelling upon the protection of my mother and sister, effectually removed the reluctance she had previously appeared to feel from herself and family being indebted to a stranger of my sex, for the comforts they might yet possibly enjoy.”

“ Her tears flowed fast, and she audibly sobbed—but they were now tears of joy and gratitude, and eased her heart of a load inexpressibly burdensome.”

“ The apothecary now returned to us, and prevailed with her to take a few drops, which

which after doing, she passed into her mother's apartment, and left us for some time."

"She then returned complaining of being drowsy, at which the apothecary appeared much pleased;—advised her to seek in sleep, a repose for all her sorrows—and to be under no uneasiness on her mother's account, for that he would remain and watch by her, as he was more accustomed to these nocturnal revels, and more capable of supporting them (and the good man smiled) than her delicate frame appeared to indicate—but upon her mother's awaking she should be called."

"After some further persuasion she at last agreed to this, particularly as the medicine began to have the desired effect so powerfully, that it was with difficulty she could keep her eyes from closing; for in addition to the medicine it was now near three o'clock in the morning, and the extreme agitation her
spirits

spirits had suffered, were almost sufficient of themselves to have produced a profound sleep.”.

“ About five o'clock the mother awaked, very weak, and languid, though perfectly composed. She first inquired for Augusta, we informed her of our having persuaded her, chiefly by the means we had used, to retire and obtain some rest; but that if she desired it, the nurse should call her.”

“ This—after we had solemnly assured her that the particulars we mentioned were the facts—she declined for a short time, wishing to know what had taken place.”

“ I then reiterated to her, my assurances of friendship, and my intention of introducing my mother and sister, whom I was convinced would feel infinite pleasure, in having an opportunity of serving them. By this means I effectually soothed her mind.”

“ Augusta

“Augusta soon after six awoke, and immediately joined us; when the apothecary and myself took our leave, promising to be there again by ten this morning. I then went home, and related these several particulars to my mother and sister—they have promised to return with me, and do every thing in their power to alleviate the afflictions of this unfortunate family, whose distresses have really excited my sympathy, even more than my curiosity.”

“I have now given you the same relation, and request your friendship to assist me with regard to the lieutenant.”

CHAP. XIII.

—————His mind appear'd
A mighty ocean stirr'd by fighting winds;
His pace uncertain, fury in his aspect,
His bosom heaving with convulsive thoughts;
By turns he cast his eyes severe to heaven;
By turns he bent them gloomy on the ground:
A pause of silence where dumb horror reign'd,
More wild and more expressive to the sight
Than on the ear the storm of words can pour.

MALLET.

THE narrative greatly interested the feelings of Erasmus in favour of the unfortunate family to whom it related, and excited his utmost indignation against the villainous proceedings

ceedings of Sir William and his emissaries.

Nor was he wholly without curiosity to learn some further particulars relative to this Augusta, to whom he more than suspected his friend had seriously become attached, even without being himself aware of the nature or extent of the sentiment he entertained. For whenever Williams had occasion to mention the name, it was with a warmth of expression—a tenderness, and an energy of manner, greatly beyond what the common feelings of humanity or benevolence, are supposed to dictate.

Yet whether she was the mother or aunt of the child mentioned—whether she was a wife or a widow—or why the child should have denominated her mamma—or why those violent expressions of grief, rage, and distraction, at the name of Sir William—very much perplexed Erasmus to determine, nor
could

could he gather from any part of the narrative sufficient information to guide his judgment to a satisfactory conclusion—he was therefore compelled to remain in this state of incertitude until time should clear up the mystery.

But he declared himself extremely desirous of contributing his endeavours to extricate this much injured family from the unfortunate situations in which they were involved, should the circumstances prove upon further investigation to be as now represented.

Immediately therefore as breakfast was finished, they sat off for St. George's Fields, designing that Williams' mother and sister should not be introduced, until they had fully prepared the unfortunate persons for the interview, and in some respect accommodated matters in the house, that the presence of additional strangers should not, from contrasted situation and appearance; add to the
painful

painful embarrassment of those whose distresses they were desirous of alleviating without wounding their feelings.

They arrived just as Augusta was placing the breakfast things. She received them with the native dignity of one accustomed to move in the first circles, yet with all the modest diffidence, the recollection of the scenes Williams had the previous evening been a witness to, were calculated to excite in a mind of such exquisite sensibility, and with a sense of obligation she appeared to feel but too keenly, though she uttered not a word.

Upon Williams' introducing Erasmus as a friend in whom he was accustomed to repose the most unlimited confidence, and on whose interest he said he greatly depended to be of service to her brother—she appeared to both, one of the most interesting objects they ever beheld—such expression, so varied, Erasmus had never before witnessed in the human

countenance ; nor did he conceive it capable of such sudden transition :—for ingenuous shame, (which naturally revolts at the sense of obligation)—native pride, grief, joy, sensibility, and gratitude, were as expressively portrayed in her countenance, during the space of a moment, (though varied with the rapidity of lightening) as the most skilful artist could possibly have displayed in as many laboured and finished productions of his utmost art.

She paid her acknowledgments to both for their attentions with inimitable grace, though she said she had not words to express what she felt—and left them to introduce her mother.

Mrs. Devereux soon after entered, leaning on the arm of her daughter, whose elegant person was finely contrasted by the emaciated and enfeebled form of her she supported, and who still retained very visible remains of much

much beauty, apparently more obscured by grief and sickness, than by the corroding tooth of time.

They both arose, and advanced to pay their respects, and to assist in seating the sick lady. She received Williams as a friend, whose kindness she had experienced, and Erasmus as one (she said) who had a sufficient claim to her confidence and gratitude, in the recommendation and friendship of him, on whose integrity and goodness of heart she placed the most perfect reliance, and to whose interposition she felt so infinitely indebted.

During their breakfast, much conversation took place with regard to the events of the previous evening, chiefly relating to the lieutenant, who the mother described as possessing but one fault—too much impetuosity—in every other respect a most exemplary character, the best of sons and brothers, and anxious of fulfilling every duty in society.

She likewise acquainted them with many particulars of the landlord's conduct, which plainly stamped him a villian, and but too intimately connected with Sir William Clementson.

After they had in some degree succeeded in tranquillizing the minds of the mother and daughter, by repeated assurances of very shortly restoring to them the lieutenant, and accommodating his embarrassments, they took leave to attend to his affairs in prison, though first, during a moment's absence of the daughter, who had left the room to attend to the child already mentioned, and who was not perfectly recovered from the fright of the evening before—Williams in a private conversation with the mother, which he managed with much delicacy, presented her with the means of restoring many ornamental articles, both to their persons, and apartments, which were to be effected during their absence, and before the visit of his mother and sister, which

which was then settled to take place that afternoon.

They soon arrived at the prison which contained the brother, who they found upon entering into conversation, really calculated to adorn society.

His person possessed nothing remarkably striking, but his manners were those of a gentleman, who to a finished education had added much knowledge of genteel life; and though in a profession whose characteristic is blunt sincerity, yet as he entered it rather late in life, and more from necessity than choice, with manners and principles previously formed in the first circles of fashion, he still retained all the elegance and politeness of the most polished society.

Through the interest of Williams' gold they were soon accommodated with a room in the governor's apartments, and were left

entirely to themselves; they therefore had sufficient opportunity to enter into explanation, devise plans, and consult with each other on the necessary measures to be pursued in order to effect the liberation and future security of the lieutenant.

On their first introduction, he was reserved, silent, and his mind appeared extremely agitated.—He received them with the evident struggle of a man compelled to be obliged, yet unwilling to receive the obligation.

Williams took him by the hand, and contrary to his natural disposition, was for once as voluble, as the other was silent. He introduced Erasmus as his most intimate friend, desirous of affording the lieutenant and his family every assistance in his power, and from particular connections, likely to be of essential service in promoting his interest; by procuring him an appointment to a ship in actual service.

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The lieutenant politely bowed his thanks, though he appeared to both, from the expression of his countenance, to be still labouring with the doubts and suspicions he had the evening before given way to, as described by Williams. For he surveyed them with much attention, and with so scrutinizing an eye, as must have pierced the very soul of guilt, and seen through the intentions of the most subtle.

He at last broke silence, and with an uneven voice addressed them as follows.—
“Gentlemen.—Situating as I am now, it is true, the most trifling attention demands my warmest acknowledgments. But a prisoner, shut out from society, and all communication with my family, (for here my mother shall never enter whilst my wishes possess any influence with her) I must be content to receive as *truths*, the representations of those who may be inclined to deceive me, either from a mistaken tenderness, or from wilful de.

depravity.—Since last night I have had much leisure for reflection, and have given no small portion of that time to the painful recollections the events which have produced this imprisonment, are calculated to awaken.—I find many of the occurrences of yesterday greatly beyond my utmost powers accurately to develope, or define; among the number of surprising incidents which followed each other in such quick succession, I have been inclined to dwell with no little astonishment on the assistance your wonderful interposition (turning to Williams) afforded us—astonishing, because if intended for good, it was so providential, that a moment later and it had been ineffectual—but if designed by that execrable villain who has occasioned all our wretchedness, to fix me more completely in his power, and lull asleep the vigilance he may dread I should exert to counteract his diabolical purposes, it has, I must acknowledge, been so well timed and executed, as to set at nought all my reasoning,
all

all my conclusions, and all the penetration I may be possessed of—Yet do not suppose from this confession I am so credulous a fool, that to purchase a little temporary ease, I shall implicitly give credit to offers of assistance that may be only intended the more quietly to effect our destruction.—If then, from this incertitude of mind, and from these apprehensions, I appear to you as men of honor ungrateful, or should, in your estimation, be unworthy the favorable regard you have done me the honor to express:—If I appear suspicious, and therefore unwilling to receive favors, I entreat you will have the goodness to attribute such feelings, such suspicions, and such apprehensions, to the recollections of deceits, damned infamous deceits! practised upon myself and family, by a villain who has assumed the semblance of virtue, honor, and generosity to mask his purposes—to effect our ruin; (which he has but too successfully accomplished)—and to sink his own soul to perdition! But—there must
be

He here finished, and Williams replied—
“As I Sir have the advantage of being first known to you, permit me to assure you, by every thing most sacred and solemn, I know not this Sir William, but by name, and never, I call the eternal God to witness—never interchanged a single word with him, or with any one on his behalf, in the whole course of my existence—accidentally passing your door last night, I overheard the conversation which passed among you just before I entered, and was induced by humanity to stop and afford the assistance I was so fortunate as to be able to render your family; my name and family are respectable, the first you know, the latter (I mean my mother and sister) will endeavour by every means in their power to alleviate the afflictions your parent and sister have so poignantly endured, and I am certain if the sincerity of desire, and the soothings of friendship can mitigate the sorrows I have witnessed; nothing on their part will be neglected to afford them consolation; and this very afternoon they

they are to be introduced to each other. Your sister only waits, as I before observed, for our return, to fly to you, and participate your confinement: this she would have done last night, but for my representations by your desire, and which were almost ineffectual to restrain her. She would, I am confident, have been here by the dawn of day, could she have gained admittance; and it was with the utmost difficulty she could be persuaded to wait our return, until I assured her I was only desirous of first procuring you comfortable apartments (in case we should be disappointed in the expectation of obtaining your liberation and return with us) before I would myself accompany her here. Your mother, I will frankly admit, was at first inconsolable at your confinement, and is now impatient either to come here, or to witness your return: I fear, if the latter is not very soon accomplished, no argument or interdiction will be sufficient to keep her from you. I now again declare I wish to serve you, but

at the same time expect that confidence in *my honor*, I have placed in yours, by giving you implicit credit for every assertion you have made, that the occasion of your misfortunes has been on your part inevitable, and unmerited. Can I say more—put me to the test, and I will not shrink from the most severe investigation.”

Erasmus, upon Williams concluding, reiterated the like ignorance of Sir William Clementson, or of any one connected with him; and declared, that his friend having solicited his interest, and being inclined to serve both him and his family, from the most disinterested motives, unless his proffered services were rejected, he would find him zealous to the utmost of his abilities, to do all in his power to extricate the whole family, from, in his opinion, the unmerited adversity they were struggling with. The lieutenant bowed his head—took a hand of each—but could not speak—got up and walked several times
across

across the room, and appeared almost suffocated by excess of feeling. Erasmus and Williams tried all in their power to relieve his mind from the sense of obligation; and reanimate his hopes of yet witnessing his family flourishing in deserved prosperity, and enjoying happiness. But, ah! how little did they think at that moment, of the scenes which awaited their return—of the misery yet in store for these children of affliction. Providence, just and wise in all his dispensations, for ends to us weak mortals inscrutable, suffers us (incapable of discerning the good that is to result, from the evil that is visible) to endure the iron scourge of keen adversity for a season, that our souls, sensible of former errors, and purified from the dregs of corruption which warps us from our duty, may become pure and acceptable in his sight, from whose hand we receive every good and perfect gift.

But to return—after they had sat a considerable time investigating the best means of counteracting Sir William's schemes, and restoring the lieutenant to liberty, just as they were about to depart, the governor entered; said he did not come to hurry them away, or interrupt them but for a moment. He had just parted, he said, from a stranger, who had called to put him upon his guard against a very bad man, he had then the care of as a prisoner, who was very plausible in his behaviour, and generally told a sad piteous tale to gain favour, and then when he had gained his ends, would do all in his power to ruin those who had served him, for he was a very ungrateful man, and had shockingly abused and ill treated his best benefactor, who had paid all his father's debts, and his several times over; but now this wicked wretch had attempted to shoot his benefactor, and had sadly wounded him, and therefore he begged, as knowing this gentleman, who was a very generous nobleman, that no indulgence might be

be allowed : and that he, the governor, might not be any loser by not taking his money, (though he believed 'he had not much to spend. unless his wicked companions should come and supply him with any) he would of his own accord make up any loss he might in that case sustain : and he gave me these five guineas. I took them, gentlemen, (continued the governor) with no intention of abridging your liberty, sir, (bowing to the lieutenant) or depriving you of any indulgence this place can afford you ; and if you should approve it, I will, when you go up to the justices again, attend with you, and make affidavit of this being the fact, and there give up the money.

The friends made him every acknowledgment in their power, and complimented him on the strict justice and liberality of his conduct, and promised he should not be any loser by so generous a proof of humanity.

“ Why look you, gentlemen ; I think it a sufficient punishment for a real gentleman to lose his liberty, and be in such a place as this, on the best side, without driving him among your sham gentlemen of the road, who flash plenty of money, but don't care a straw with whom they keep company. I have been here a long while ; have seen many faces, and can discover a flash-man from a gentleman. Your face and behaviour please me much, Sir, pardon my freedom, (bowing to the lieutenant,) and you are heartily welcome to what accommodations you can find here, whether I get any thing or nothing.”

This both Erasmus and Williams assured him should not be the case, and as an earnest of their intentions, put into his hand a ten-pound bank note, requesting his acceptance of that in payment for the wine they had then upon the table, but which they had scarcely tasted.

He

He returned it with—"No, gentlemen! this would be little short of extorting so much money from you under pretence of getting as much by shewing you *incivility*; I expect to be paid reasonably for what I furnish, but no more. Should the money the other gave me be mentioned at the magistrate's, your enemies, out of pure spite, might perhaps inquire, whether I have not received, or am not to receive, more from the prisoner or his friends, than what they offered; and should this be the case, I can answer, not a sixpence.

They admitted the propriety of his last observation, and lamented they could not immediately reward such disinterested generosity; paid him only for the wine, and he left them.

The reader must not imagine, that during this conversation with the governor, the lieutenant

nant was silent; for though we have not broken the connection of the account with the many interruptions the governor met with, his friends had rather a difficult task to understand the whole with precision, from the violent paroxysms of rage it threw him into, particularly the mention of his father, and the debts discharged several times over, on his own account; “infamous falsehood! infamous villain!” exclaimed the lieutenant, when he could articulate his rage; “he never discharged a shilling of debt for me in his life;” but, turning to Williams and Erasmus, “but you, my friends, are entitled to my utmost confidence; I will endeavour to give you, at our next meeting, a succinct relation of the principal events of my life, and the occasion of myself and family being reduced to this abject situation, and then leave you to judge of the *obligations* we have to that villain, and the *ingratitude* of my conduct.”

After

After some further conversation, Williams and his friend took leave of the lieutenant, intending first to call upon his mother and sister, and then upon a gentleman of the Temple, who they thought of employing professionally to obtain his liberation.

CHAP. XIV.

———" the grief that does not speak,
Whispers the o'er fraught heart, and bids it break."

SHAKESPEARE.

THEY arrived at the mother's just time enough to witness a scene which harrowed up their souls—the poor old lady wrapped up and insensible, being at that instant brought down stairs by two bailiffs, who had arrested her at the suit of Sir William Clementson, for £.3500. This greatly astonished them—they knew not what to think, or how to account for such a sum being due to Sir William, unless he had indeed repeatedly paid the lieutenant's debts; but this was no time for inquiry: their first concern was for the
lifeless

lifeless mother ; they entreated, and after much persuasion, prevailed with the men to return up stairs again—where, upon entering the room, to their infinite surprise, they found Augusta seated on a chair, in the attitude of fixed attention—her eyes apparently looking to the door, but not a muscle of her countenance in motion. They spoke to her—she did not answer—nor did she appear capable of understanding any thing of the scene around her.

From the nurse, a female servant in the house, and the bailiffs, they gathered the following particulars :—That soon after their departure in the morning a gentleman, a friend who was in the habit of visiting Mrs. Devereux, had called, and appeared (the servant said, for this was her account, as she passed several times through the room to do her work) sometimes sorry and sometimes glad at what the ladies were telling him ; and once she heard him say, “ thank God ! you have

have now found friends, and you may again be happy!" but about twelve o'clock a knock came at the door, and she let in those two gentlemen (pointing to the bailiffs) who inquired for Mrs. Devereux; she shewed them up, and went about her business.—The nurse then said, that they requested to speak with the old lady apart; but upon her saying she had no secrets from those present, they said they were sorry to inform her they had a writ against her, at the suit of Sir William Clementson, for the sum above stated, and that she must go with them. That her mistress looked frightened, but at last said, "God's will be done! he is a wicked man, but I must submit—what can I do?" (turning to the old gentleman who was her friend). He required to see the writ—read it, and said there's no help, you must go. But before this, the young lady had been looking about at them all, had once shrieked, clasped her hands, and had never since altered either the position of her eyes or her person; that her
mother

mother spoke to her several times, but she did not answer; which after some time so frightened the old lady, that she too went into hysterics; and then the gentleman tried all in his power to recover her, but could not: at last he wrote something like a doctor, and said, for the love of God some of you run to an apothecary, and tell whoever is in the way to send what is there written. Susan (the servant) went, and came back with the gentleman, who was here all night, and they gave drops and several things to both the ladies, but though the mother sighed many times, she has never opened her eyes since; and Miss has never moved or spoke at all: the gentlemen here (pointing to the bailiffs) said they could not wait any longer, and notwithstanding what the old gentleman said, they would carry her mistress away. He therefore at last inquired what house they were going to, and being told, is just gone to prepare a bed for her; he left the apothecary here (after talking something to him, I believe in latin, for I

didn't understand it) to take care of Miss ; and went away in great haste. The apothecary is likewise gone home for something, and desired me to support Miss from falling till he returned ; but, God help her, (continued the nurse) he needn't have given me that charge, for Miss wont move do all we can."

Here she was interrupted by the entrance of that worthy man, who shook his head, and observed, he feared there were bad doings, and foul play somewhere.

The friends assured him nothing on their part should be omitted to investigate this affair thoroughly ; and asked his opinion of the two ladies. The mother, he said, would recover but too soon for her peace—but he entertained considerable apprehensions for the daughter, whose case was doubtful, if not desperate : he had once in his practice witnessed a similar instance of terror overcoming the mind, and the person remained six weeks

weeks insensible; and before she perfectly recovered, kept her bed four months; he hoped this would not now be the case, though he could not hazard an opinion.

Erasmus desired a physician might be sent for. The apothecary said, the gentleman he found here, on his second visit, was one, and a friend: therefore no necessity for any additional advice. They agreed in this; and whilst the nurse and the maid servant were putting Augusta to bed, the apothecary endeavoured to hasten Mrs. Devereux's recovery, who still remained insensible, though he declared it almost a cruelty to awaken her to a sense of such complicated misery, as she must endure, upon regaining her memory.

The men who still retained her in custody, after receiving a handsome compliment for their politeness (as it is called), upon a coach being sent for, bore off their unhappy charge to the lock-up house, to which place Williams

accompanied her, that in case of her recovering in the coach, she might not (from finding herself entirely among strangers, of whom she could have but a confused recollection) relapse.

Erasmus waited the return of his friend, in the house which contained the terror-struck Augusta, whose malady it is impossible properly to describe, or for language to convey any adequate conception of the appearance she made, unless the reader has seen Mrs. Siddons in the character of Mrs. Beverly in the Gamester—just such another countenance of fixed horror and distraction he must remember to have witnessed in that inimitable actress; but in this instance the interest was beyond all comparison in the opinion of Erasmus, increased. For in this child of real sorrow, he well knew there was no scenic art to cheat him into a moment's feeling; nor did he expect any pleasant after-piece to succeed, to relieve his mind from the horror
of

of dwelling on so dreadful a representation; all here was actual suffering, produced by, he believed, the ungovernable depravity of a villain whose elevated situation in life, and immense property, gave him the power of perpetrating crimes, no one not absolutely abandoned to every vice, and callous to every feeling of humanity, could even think on, much less commit, without compunction.

In about two hours Williams returned—he informed Erasmus and the apothecary, that as soon as they arrived, they found a bed ready prepared, to which the good old lady was immediately carried—a nurse sent for, and the friendly physician waiting to administer to the utmost extent of his abilities, both his aid in the healing art, and in the more arduous situation of finding upon her recovering her recollection, consolation to sooth afflictions so severe, and so complicated.

“ He met us (said Williams) upon the coach stopping, with the most anxious impatience visible on his countenance, and appeared deeply interested in the happiness of his friend: finding she still continued insensible, he desired the women to undress her, and place her in bed as quickly as possible, which when done he would immediately join them; “ in the mean time (turning to me) may I inquire, Sir, if you are one of those friends Mrs. Devereux mentioned to me this morning, as having afforded them unlooked-for assistance at a moment of the utmost need.” “ I answered (continued Williams) I had the happiness to render them last night some trifling assistance; and, in company with my friend, was just returned from a visit to her son, when we found the men carrying the unhappy mother out of the house; that my name was Williams, and that both my friend and myself were inclined to exert our utmost interest to serve the whole family; yet this last event was really so unexpected—so strange,

strange, (from some conversation which had passed between her son and ourselves), and of so great a magnitude, that I really was at a loss what to think, or what measures to pursue; but hoped as he appeared to be better acquainted with the family, to receive some information, that might serve to guide us aright through this labyrinth of difficulties; lest in our zeal to be of service, we might unintentionally do them more mischief than benefit.

“ He appeared confused; said, that indeed theirs was a very melancholy tale; though he was scarcely authorized, even by his long friendship, to take upon himself to enter into any particulars, which afterwards they might be displeased to find related. He could only say, that he knew them to be a most deserving, and at the same time a most unfortunate, much injured family; and begged that should I hear any thing calculated to lessen them in my opinion, or that might call in question the propriety

propriety of conduct of any of the family, that I would have the goodness to suspend my judgment until the recovery of the mother, when he would take an opportunity to recommend an ingenuous explanation of every event of their lives, to friends he thought so justly entitled to their confidence; he would only, he said, detain my attention with one further observation—whatever might be reported to their disadvantage, and he doubted if much would not be reported—he would pledge his life and honor, on the rectitude of their general conduct, and entreated that with this I would for the present rest satisfied; and to believe that no such sum was really due to Sir William as that mentioned in the writ, though sworn to; for that he (Sir William) was a wretch undeserving the appellation of a human being. He wished much for the poor lady's restoration to reason, that some legal measures might be taken."

I then

“ I then (continued Williams) acquainted him with our intention to employ Fordyce, and that we were to have called upon him immediately after we had acquainted the mother and sister in what state we had left the lieutenant. That we would see this gentleman in the evening, and had hopes of effecting something on their behalf; though Augusta's recovery appeared to me of the first importance, both to mother and son, as the lieutenant was in momentary expectation of seeing her, and would be both surprised, and alarmed, at her absence; and the first object the mother would naturally inquire for, on recovering her reason, would be her daughter.

“ He agreed with me on these points, and said the moment he could leave the mother, he would look in on the daughter; though he believed he had left her in very good hands, as the gentleman who attended her appeared both skilful and humane; and upon
quitting

quitting the house, he had given him some necessary directions, which he trusted would have the desired effect.

“ He here (being informed the lady had discovered some symptoms of returning life) quitted me to attend his friend. I remained below about half an hour, and during that time took the opportunity of assuring the people of the house, I would become responsible for the payment of every demand they might have against the lady they then had the charge of, during her stay with them; and as an earnest, deposited a ten pound bank note in their hands. They promised to shew her every attention and civility, and not to remove her until the return of the writ, though they hinted some one had recommended a different line of conduct.

“ A servant then informed me the sick lady wished to see me—I went up and found her, though very feeble and exhausted, perfectly

fectly sensible. She looked at me very expressively for some moments, without being able to articulate a word; at last, with much difficulty, and by pausing at every second word, she spoke to nearly the following effect:—

“ Ah, my friend! little did I expect this blow, when we parted in the morning. Dreadful alteration! I can look forward to nothing now but perpetual confinement for myself, and wretchedness the most compleat for my children. But the Lord’s will be done—‘ Affliction cometh not forth of the ‘ dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ‘ ground.’—We must therefore make up our minds to suffer. It becomes not me to complain or repine; great have been the mercies I have partaken with my family, yet great are the afflictions we have for a long time, and now must still longer endure. Yet to be shut up in different prisons—to be denied all intercourse of sorrows—is hard, very hard.
How

How was my son when you left him? and how did he seem to endure a prison?—My dear Augusta, too,—but she is happily for a season insensible of the misery herself and family have yet to struggle with. My friend here (turning to the physician) has promised that she, with my little darling Emma, shall be removed to me here this evening. I shall then, I hope, be better, and will nurse them both myself. Poor child! thou art introduced into a world of trouble, and wilt very early become familiar with sorrow, and learn humility in the rugged school of adversity. Oh, God! we are poor weak mortals; remember us in mercy, and spare us when we call upon thee! give us strength to endure this chastening, and support us by thy grace under these heavy afflictions. I thank you, my friend, for the assistance you have afforded us. I will, if more able, endeavour tomorrow to recount the several circumstances of my unfortunate life; in the mean time, my friend here will acquaint you with such particulars

particulars as are necessary to elucidate, and account for the present calamitous event, and the occasion of our being so greatly in the power of a wretch, long bent on our destruction. But when you learn the extent of our sorrows, do not too harshly condemn; think of us as favourably as candour will admit; and believe, however faulty, nay (for this is not a time to gild vice by softened appellations) however *guilty*, we may appear in the judgment of those who may not have so greatly erred: yet believe me, my friend, ours was but a single deviation, and sorrow, bitter, unavailing sorrow, has ever since been the consequence of this deviation. These recollections, my friend, exhaust my strength—for, oh! how bitter to a parent, to recollect, and recount the failings of a beloved child, who was the pride of her life. Who was—nay who is still, the most virtuous, the most affectionate, the most tender, and the most gentle of her sex.”

“ Here she paused for a long time, overcome by the variety of poignant sensations these awakened recollections produced, and which seemed to convulse her whole frame in so violent a manner as totally to deny her further utterance. The good physician here expressed a wish I would stop any further conversation, and for the present leave her to repose.

“ But she motioned for me to sit still, and at last added, “ I cannot at present proceed with, or enter further upon a recital, which wounds my very soul to recollect—you will know all but too soon, and then we shall no longer be thought deserving of your friendship, or entitled to your regard.”

“ I here assured her, nothing I was convinced, could lessen the interest I really felt in their misfortunes ; and was persuaded, she was too severe in her condemnation of errors, which, when related, I doubted not would excite

cite more commiseration than reprehension—as minds apparently so virtuous, could not long remain in error, however for a moment the frailty of human nature might be overpowered and led astray.”

“ She shook her head—said I was too kind in my constructions—and for a moment was silent. She then continued—

“ This long conversation, my friend, has so exhausted my strength, that I am at present unable to add more, than to entreat you to bear my thanks to your friend Mr. Ingelbert; tell him, a bankrupt in all things but *gratitude*; I can *feel* his goodness, though I can neither express my sense of it, or hope to repay it. To the God of Heaven I will pray that both of you may be rewarded a thousand fold. Do what you can for my poor boy, and I shall die contented. I feel these repeated trials will soon bring me to that haven of peace, ‘ where the wicked cease from troubling,

troubling, and where the weary are at rest.' I am very weak—God bless you."

"She here concluded, and I left her, as she promised to endeavour to obtain some rest.

"In the course of the conversation, I repeatedly gave her the strongest assurance every exertion should be made to bring them at least together, if nothing better could be accomplished; and said all in my power to support and console her under the weight of these severe trials.

"A daughter bereft of reason—a son in prison with felons—and herself a prisoner at the suit of so malignant a villain as this Sir William appears, and for so large a sum; are certainly dreadful reflections for a parent, and which nothing but a sense of religion, and the consequent belief in an over-ruling Providence, could at all support her from sinking under. To that religion, and that
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over-ruling Providence, the only sure defence in time of trouble, I left her, and returned to consult with you what must now be done. We cannot abandon them at a moment when their sufferings excite a greater interest, and so greatly call for some powerful interposition to protect them from the vengeance and machinations of a wretch, who, unless his schemes are counteracted, appears determined to overwhelm them with misery, and to crush them by means of that superiority and influence, his rank and wealth gives him over them. But at the same time we must consider how far it is prudent for us to proceed in the investigation of affairs, which the more we learn, the more complicated and embarrassing they become—and the greater exertion they require, both of personal and pecuniary interference.

“ If, then, my friend, (continued Williams) you should, considering all these circumstances, be unwilling to involve yourself and
x 3 fortune

fortune further, do not, merely from friendship to me, or from the representation I have made, be induced to extend your assistance beyond what you can conveniently spare to the demands of the unfortunate. For myself, I will freely declare, I feel so greatly prepossessed and interested in their concerns, that if upon a proper investigation, and recital of the particulars of their lives, I find them (and of which at present I have not the smallest doubt) the deserving objects I think them; I will then hazard the last shilling of my own fortune in their service, and will exert the utmost I can individually among my friends, to extricate them from calamities that are so dreadful, and so severe; and from the malice of a villain who appears so powerful. But though I feel thus strongly impelled and drawn by an irresistible impulse of humanity to assist them with my life, and to the utmost extent of my fortune; yet I do not wish to hurry you into an affair in which you may not feel a like degree of interest, or be inclined

clined to advance further but from friendship to me. If such, I say, should be your sentiments, I will still consult with you on every step I take, and profit by your advice; and only look for that assistance you can, without injury to yourself, afford to contribute."

Williams here stopped, and waited his friend's reply.

Erasmus answered him.—" I have suffered you to express much more than there was any occasion for, but I was desirous of hearing you to an end, that in case you advanced some sage axiom of wisdom, I might profit by the advice—save a little superfluous cash, and lock up the feelings of humanity, and the best affections of the soul, in order to act with the prudent caution of those whose bosoms never glowed in the cause of persecuted innocence.—For shame, my friend—do more justice to the knowledge you certainly have of my heart, than to suppose it
can

can so meanly shrink from any danger in the cause of virtue, though opposed by the influence of splendid infamy, and the atrocity of depraved appetites."

The countenance of Williams fully expressed the satisfaction these assurances of co-operation gave him—and he declared himself more indebted to his friendship in this one instance, than by any favor or obligation he could otherwise individually have conferred.

They then, as they found Augusta still continued in the same state of insensibility, agreed to call in upon the Lieutenant, and say—that desirous to save him and his sister the anguish of meeting in a prison, they would, if agreeable to him, endeavour to prevail with her to defer her visit at least another day, as they had given in the names of two persons as bail, whom they were in
hopes

hopes would the following morning be accepted, and he obtain his liberty.

For passing the house where Sir William then resided, they had seen him at the window apparently in high spirits.—This determined them to call upon the surgeon to declare again upon oath, the true state of his health: and should his account still continue unfavorable, they then intended to get some gentleman of the faculty of established reputation to look in, in order to ascertain the truth of the other's report.

This perfectly satisfied the Lieutenant, whose inquiries relative to his family—as both Williams and Erasmus had spoken so confidently in the morning—were easily evaded, without any material departure from the truth.

Upon leaving him, they returned to the apartments of his sister, and there found the
friendly

friendly physician exerting his utmost endeavours for her recovery.

After remaining for some time alone, he joined them.—Williams introduced Erasmus as the other friend, Mrs. Devereux had mentioned to him—and all presently became as well known to each other, as though years had cemented their acquaintance.

The physician then gave them some particulars relative to the arrest, which proved Sir William one of the most diabolical wretches that ever disgraced humanity.

They then proceeded to the Temple, to the chambers of Mr. Fordyce, (a professional gentleman of much eminence in the law) related to him the outlines of the foregoing—just sufficient for him to understand the nature of the business they wished him legally to investigate—and again looked in upon Mrs. Devereux who they found—though
very

very weak, and much agitated from anxiety for her children—yet better considering all circumstances, than they could well have expected.

They gave her hopes of a speedy liberation, both for herself and son, and advanced every argument religion afforded them, to comfort and tranquillize her mind; and though they did not succeed to the utmost of their wishes, they exceeded their hopes, and left her to endeavour, if practicable, to remove her daughter, with the child, to her solitary apartment.

On their return to the melancholy residence of Augusta, they found the good physician and the apothecary, still busy in their endeavours to effect her restoration; but her disorder appeared to baffle alike the aid of medicine, and the skill of these humane and disinterested practitioners. The former, with visible uneasiness, observed, that he could
not,

not, from her present situation, entertain the smallest hope of her speedy recovery ; and saw no better method of proceeding (in order to quiet the apprehensions of the mother) than to have her wrapped up warm in blankets, and in that state remove her to the lock-up house.

Little Emma was also to accompany the fair invalid ; and in the reunion of that part of the family, the physician said, he hoped to effect much good, by engaging the attention, and calling forth all the tenderness of Mrs. Devereux to the situation of her daughter ; and thereby to prevent her from relapsing into a state of insensibility : or, what was still worse, dwelling upon the incidents of the last two days—until these awakened and poignant recollections, should in a moment of phrensy drive her to the commission of some act of desperation, beyond any of their power, perhaps, afterwards to rectify.

This

This last reflection was too dreadful for them to suffer another moment to pass in uncertainty, or hazard the possibility of such calamitous consequences taking place during their absence ; they therefore procured a coach, and with all imaginary precaution removed the lovely insensible to the care of her parent, whom they found little short of the state the physician had expressed his apprehensions of.

For left alone, though but for a short time, she had given way to reflections, the miserable situation herself and family were reduced to naturally excited : and when they arrived, so entirely absorbed was she in these distracting contemplations, as scarcely to notice their entrance. She appeared to have indulged the idea of losing her daughter, until she had persuaded herself of the reality of her death. For when she at last beheld, as she supposed, the lifeless corse of her beloved Augusta, she started from her chair, and in

an agony of grief exclaimed—"O, my child! my child!—I knew it was so!—I knew she was dead! I knew they would kill her!—But we will not long be separated. The same grave shall hold us both: and in a better world we may again be happy!"

This was all spoken with such rapidity—and the whole of the scene passed in such a moment of time, that it was with difficulty they prevented her from rending open the coverings in which Augusta was wrapped, and in her eagerness to clasp the supposed dead body of her child, from dashing both herself and daughter to the ground. They attempted to sooth—to expostulate. Declared she was mistaken—that her violence would destroy not only herself and daughter, but also little Emma; and that unless she would be more calm they would leave her. She heeded them not! She was alike deaf to their entreaties and their threats.

At

At last, to their inexpressible surprise, Augusta, just as her mother had torn open the blanket which covered her head and part of her face, suddenly heaved an hysteric sigh, and for a moment opened her eyes.

Her mother, whose whole attention had been directed solely to the one point—that of convincing herself her daughter no longer existed; passed in a moment from this agonizing belief, to the certainty of having witnessed she did indeed live. She was now as extravagant in her expressions of joy, as she had before been of grief. Clasped her daughter to her bosom, and conjured her in the most affectionate, most persuasive accents, to assure her she did indeed exist; yet so hurried and broken by the conflicting passions which now possessed her bosom, that all present were extremely apprehensive her intellects would suffer, even if a total privation of reason did not take place.

The lucid symptom Augusta had shewn, proved as fallacious as it was momentary; for before her mother could well finish her exclamation of joy, the traces of her recovery were no longer visible, and she sunk again into total insensibility.

The disappointment of the mother, was in proportion to her sudden and high-raised expectations of felicity; and she became wholly incapable of assisting either in the necessary means for her recovery, or in removing her to the bed already prepared for that purpose in an adjoining room.

Williams and Erasmus finding they could not then be of any further service, promised to look in again in the course of the evening, and immediately proceeded to Bedford-square; where they found the counsellor and his lady rather impatiently, as well as anxiously, waiting dinner: as it was then nearly five o'clock, and Williams had by note to his
mother,

mother in the morning, whilst at the prison, requested dinner might be ordered earlier than usual, that she and his sister might be ready to attend him to the apartments of Mrs. and Miss Devereux that afternoon. But when they acquainted them with the foregoing particulars, and the dreadful state in which both Augusta and her mother continued, the only sentiment which pervaded the bosoms of the whole family, was compassion for these unfortunate victims of oppression, and a determination on the part of the counsellor, to exert his utmost interest, and professional skill, to extricate them all from afflictions so poignant, and sufferings apparently so wholly unmerited.

After a moment's pause the counsellor added, " Perhaps it may be possible to obtain the mother's discharge by application to a judge, for a summons to compel Sir William to produce his bill of particulars ; but in case of that failing, I will make some further

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inquiries,

inquiries, personally, both of the mother, and the physician : which, if upon investigation I find to agree with what you have related, she shall then be bailed, and in that case I will myself become one, and make no doubt of procuring the other ; though as the sum is so considerable (and it is required that *both securities* should be *housekeepers*) it becomes a matter of some moment, not to hazard a responsibility without being perfectly convinced of the honor of the party concerned to await the final judgment of the court."

This determination of the counsellor to afford them the aid of his professional abilities to investigate the business, highly gratified Erasmus, as it would enable him to act upon one of the principles laid down by his father in the invaluable packet we have before so often alluded to—"Lavish not indiscriminately your benevolence ; nor waste upon worthless characters, or fictitious sorrow, those sums you may want to relieve the truly unfortunate ;

fortunate: never let slip an opportunity of doing good when the occasion is pressing, by meanly balancing the possibility of a deception—nor on the contrary incapacitate yourself from affording substantial assistance to distressed merit, by a profuse liberality to every claimant, who may be able to excite your sensibility, without satisfying your judgment. Remember it is not merely the bestowing, or parting with large sums of money, which constitutes a real philanthropist, or that christian character described by our Saviour in his gospel—No! much more is requisite. To be really charitable, you must be *actively* benevolent—you must visit the sick—release the prisoner—sooth the afflicted—as well as feed the hungry, or clothe the naked: And these you must select with judgment, relieve with delicacy, and compassionate with tenderness.”

Such was the advice of Inglebert to his son Erasmus, when on the eve of quitting life;

life; and so strict the attention and wish of Erasmus to pay implicit obedience to all the directions of his father, that he felt the truest pleasure from the conviction that the superior judgment of counsellor Williams would, in this affair, direct his own to a right decision in regard to the claims the unfortunate family in question had upon his assistance.

Erasmus knew the counsellor to be a man of the strictest principles, united to the utmost liberality of sentiment; and though his professional avocations brought him acquainted with numerous instances of iniquitous deception, and consequently rendered him cautious, yet his benevolence was only bounded by prudence or inability; Erasmus could therefore rely upon his judgment with the greatest security and satisfaction.

It was at last agreed that Williams and Erasmus should return to Mrs. Devereux, and give her every assurance of assistance
and

and support from the counsellor that the nature of the circumstances would admit; candidly declaring at once, the express conditions upon which he undertook to interfere; and that the moment he should have occasion to alter his opinion, he renounced all connection either with the parties or the cause, and should abandon both to the mercy of their fate.

This, in the course of their stay that evening, they communicated to Mrs. Devereux, though in manner and language so delicate, that the most sensitive mind could not have taken offence. She received this offer of assistance with the most expressive gratitude: and declared, that so far from considering the precaution unreasonable or impertinent, if he could spare time to attend to so long a narrative; she trusted she had it in her power perfectly to convince him of the authenticity of her statements; or at least to enter into such particulars, as must satisfy a candid humane disposition.

The

The friends left her at a late hour, to the melancholy employment of watching the slow recovery of her beloved daughter, who still remained in the same state of total insensibility ; but before they parted, they arranged matters for the subsequent day, and promised her nothing should be omitted to obtain the liberation of her son.

Here for a short time we shall leave this unfortunate family, and look back to the other objects of our attention.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

———" She was her sex's pride:
Nor think my tongue too lavish, if I speak her;
Fair as the fame of Virtue, and yet chaste
As its cold precepts; wise beyond her sex
And blooming youth, soft as forgiving mercy,
Yet greatly brave, and jealous for her honour."

ROWE.

LORD Orlington arrived in London with his charming daughter, a few days before these last mentioned particulars had first been related to Erasmus—had called upon his sister, and finding her so much better than her letter had led him to suppose, was almost angry she had recalled them in such haste. But as they were now altogether in London, he proposed having a party of friends, chiefly political,

political, at his house in Berkley-square, the following Friday, for the purpose, he said, of introducing Erasmus, as his nephew and future son-in-law, and invited her to be present.

Mrs. Inglebert looked somewhat astonished: but his Lordship assured her he had already discussed this matter with Erasmus, who had expressed the utmost regard and attachment to his cousin, and no little gratitude for the advantages intended him.

His Lordship, after some further conversation with his sister, in the course of which he found Erasmus had not mentioned a single syllable of the intentions expressed by himself, and apparently acceded to by Erasmus, as related in the tenth chapter, which not a little perplexed him—took leave; having first consented, though rather reluctantly, that Adelaide should for once be included in the party for the following Friday, on condition
that

that Mrs. Inglebert should not mention the subject of their then discourse to Erasmus, but leave every thing to his management, intending at that moment to act the profound politician. But alas! his Lordship's education had neither fitted him for that character, or for any thing that required consistence; and the caprice or circumstance of the moment was ever the governing principle, and sure to determine his conduct.

Erasmus had spent some portion of each day with his uncle and cousin, in Berkley-square, which greatly pleased his Lordship, and almost led him to conclude his suspicions were without foundation; but the two last had passed and they had not seen him.

It was now Friday morning—Erasmus rose early, and finding Adelaide alone in the breakfast parlour, gave her the several particulars of the unfortunate family, as already related.

Her feeling heart sympathized in all their sufferings; she wept at the relation of such complicated misery, and expressed an earnest wish, that with his mother she might be permitted to endeavour to alleviate their afflictions.

Erasmus thought she never looked so beautiful—so truly captivating, as at this moment. A tear still trembled in her eye as she expressed this wish—her countenance glowed with the pure feelings of humanity—and her heart beat in the cause of persecuted innocence (for such with Erasmus she concluded them)—her arm rested on his shoulder—and her face was at this instant, with increased expression, turned full upon him—and in faltering accents she added, “Oh, Erasmus! were similar misfortunes to happen to you, what would become of your mother—what would become of Adelaide?” The bare idea of such a calamity was so intolerable, that it convulsed

convulsed her whole frame, and she was near fainting.

Erasmus, with feelings which language cannot describe, and even beyond what he had before thought possible, pressed her to his bosom—said a thousand tender things to reanimate her spirits—blessed Heaven, and the care of his parents, that such scenes were never likely to be endured by either of them; and concluded with saying, he lived but in the hope of shielding her from every adversity, and procuring for her every good: and that he was persuaded his mother would rejoice, and feel a pleasure almost equal to his own, in his possession of such a treasure.

A scene somewhat similar to the one which took place between them the morning after his first explicit declaration, was now again renewed, though Adelaide was almost inclined to believe his mother was really more favourably disposed to such an event, than at

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that

that time she imagined, or dared indulge a hope of.

At that instant they heard footsteps approaching.

Adelaide hastily resumed her seat, and Erasmus, with some confusion, endeavoured to resume his narrative of the unfortunate Mrs. Devereux and her family.

To their very great surprise Lord Orlington entered—appeared for a moment to be equally embarrassed with themselves—recovered himself—inquired for his sister—remarked they were early risers—and at last, with an affectation of sudden surprise, observed, “why children you seem to have been weeping:—though I suppose only over some sad fictitious sorrow—some fatal disappointment in love—or some horrific, interesting tale of former times, whose hero and heroine has sufficiently rewarded the painful sympathy

sympathy they have excited, by the display of heroism we poor mortals may admire, but cannot imitate ; am I not right, nephew ?”

Erasmus assured his uncle, the tale that occasioned the sensibility he was pleased to notice, and which had then engaged their attention, was no fictitious sorrow—but real afflictions ; to part of which he had himself been a witness.

Mrs. Inglebert, before her son could enter upon the relation of these particulars, now entered—noticed the disorder of Adelaide (which by this time was greatly increased) and inquired the cause.

This Erasmus undertook to give an account of—and again related the events of the two preceding days, with all their circumstantial particulars. Mrs. Inglebert was much affected—declared a like wish with Adelaide to contribute all in her power to alleviate

their afflictions, and desired Erasmus to inform Mrs. Devereux she should be happy to render her and her family every assistance possible.

Lord Orlington affected to feel equally interested, and said, "If I can be of any service, nephew, you may command me." Erasmus took his uncle's hand—pressed it, and declared how much his interest in this affair would oblige him.

His Lordship rose—desired them to remember they were engaged for the afternoon—that he should expect them by six, as that was his usual dinner hour, and wished them good morning.

Nothing further of consequence took place at this time. Mrs. Inglebert and Adelaide, soon after breakfast was finished, retired to prepare for this important visit; and Erasmus left them, to call upon Williams, with whom,

whom, in conjunction with the others who were to take part in the business, he had promised to dedicate the whole morning, in endeavouring to investigate the affairs of the lieutenant and his family.

At the hour appointed Erasmus joined his mother and Adelaide, and they proceeded together to Berkley-square. The party they found there, consisted of some of the first families of distinction in the kingdom. His Lordship introduced his sister, and then his nephew, with much ceremony, individually to every one present; at last he approached Adelaide, and with an emotion he could not entirely get rid of, or conceal from his sister, who watched him with great attention, passed his eye round the circle—bowed—and pronounced rather indistinctly the name of ‘Miss Faulkner.’

A whisper of “what a lovely girl,” circulated in a moment through the whole of the company,

company, and occasioned very different sensations in the bosoms of Lord Orlington, Mrs. Inglebert, Erasmus, and Adelaide; the last it a good deal embarrassed, without gratifying her vanity. But his Lordship's feelings were not the most pleasant; nor can we pretend to define them, without subjecting him to the imputation of an unnatural father; and God knows his bad qualities have hitherto been sufficiently numerous, without adding this last to the catalogue. For of all characters, a father persecuting his own child, is surely the most wicked, and the most detestable in nature. But to return—

Henrietta received her aunt with the most respectful attention; and assiduously endeavoured to cultivate the good opinion of both her and Adelaide—having been long prepared to esteem and love them, from the description and encomiums of Erasmus,

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The company were at last seated, and, to the number of twenty-eight, sat down to a table covered with every luxury in or out of season, that art could devise, or wealth procure.

Dinner over—the ladies retired to the with-drawing room, and left the gentlemen to indulge in their two most favourite propensities—politics and wine; the last was swallowed in large quantities, and the first discussed with all the zeal of party disputants.

The matter is not material here to relate—the manner was the chief object of consideration at this time, as Erasmus had previously been stated an orator; nor were any of the gentlemen disappointed in their expectations in this respect, or inclined to express the slightest difference of opinion upon the subject. He spoke frequently by the artful management of his uncle, and always spoke well—so well, that the whole party
were

were as desirous of engaging him in their politics as his Lordship, and each with a like degree of partiality—for himself. All, excepting one—the Earl of Charleville; a nobleman who united the polish of the court—the accomplishment of the gentleman—the learning of the scholar—and the benevolence of the philanthropist, in the character of the Peer. He took particular notice of Erasmus—distinguished him by the most flattering and delicate attention—and before they parted, declared he should be happy to cultivate his further acquaintance.

The frequent and confident manner in which his uncle spoke of his marriage with Henrietta, as a thing determined upon, disconcerted and perplexed Erasmus in the extreme; nor could he in any manner immediately contradict his Lordship's statements—for they were so suddenly made—the conversation so quickly turned—the manner so affectionate towards himself—and the whole conducted

conducted with so much art; that Erasmus had only time to resolve upon seeking the first opportunity possible to undeceive his Lordship with regard to the object of his affections.

So various was the conversation, and at times so well supported on the part of Erasmus, that all were pleased, and expressed their satisfaction in the most rapturous terms of admiration. "You must come into parliament," echoed, and re-echoed, from one to another, until Erasmus was nearly tired of hearing himself so extravagantly bepraised.

When the party broke up, all complimented Mrs. Inglebert upon possessing a son who promised to be one of the brightest ornaments of his country.

They who are parents, will readily conceive how gratifying such eulogies were on the present occasion, and will pity, rather than
condemn,

condemn, the maternal affection which led her to regret for the first time, her protection of the poor destitute Adelaide—the child of her own adoption—but now considered as the only hinderance she could suppose likely to prevent her son from really becoming the distinguished character his uncle, and the company present, appeared to think him. But she well knew the firmness and the decision of this darling son, and that having once adopted a line of conduct, or a principle of action from a conviction of its propriety, he was immovable. She had also long seen his affections were unalterably Adelaide's—had once rejoiced at the prospect of the happiness he was likely to enjoy in an union with this lovely, virtuous girl: but now sighed to see him elevated to the first situations in the state—to witness a crowded senate, and an admiring world do justice to his supereminent abilities. Such are the suggestions of ambition; and such the dreams of greatness.

The

The following morning Lord Orlington, with his daughter, called upon Mrs. Inglebert, who they found rather in a bustle, having just received a letter from Sir John Griffiths, which stated his lady to be very much indisposed, and expressed a wish that Mrs. Inglebert would hasten her return as quickly as the nature of her affairs would admit.

This she designed complying with immediately, as she could entrust her business to the management of her son, and only waited his return home to inform him of her intention of leaving London for a few weeks, in order to spend that time with her friend Lady Griffiths. Adelaide was also to have accompanied her, but Henrietta entreated so eloquently to be favored with her friend's company in Berkley-square, and was so warmly seconded by Lord Orlington, that Mrs. Inglebert at last consented to her request.

Upon Erasmus' return to dinner, he found the post chaise waiting at the door, and his mother ready to leave London. She acquainted him with the cause, and that Adelaide was gone to Berkley-square, with his uncle and cousin, to reside until her return—that they would expect to see him there in the evening—and at last concluded with a warm panegyric on the beauty, accomplishments, and amiable disposition of his cousin, who, she observed, was deserving of his utmost attention and regard.

This she spoke with such remarkable emphasis, and in so pointed a manner, that he could not avoid noticing she had some particular object in view by mentioning the subject.

He felt extremely agitated, and but ill prepared just then to enter upon any discussion that might occasion a difference between his mother and himself, or involve him in any
dispute

dispute with his uncle—as he had in consequence of their voluntary offer, assured Mrs. Devereux and her family, that they, with Adelaide and his cousin, would feel infinite pleasure in contributing to restore her family to the enjoyment of competence and peace: and that either that evening, or the following day, he would have the pleasure of introducing his mother, and the other females of his family, to her acquaintance.

He felt, therefore, exceedingly disappointed at finding he should not be able to realize the expectations he had, with so much confidence, raised in Mrs. Devereux; and expressed this disappointment, and the occasion of it, to his mother, with such feeling and energy of expression, that it not only turned the conversation, but induced her to postpone her journey to the following morning, in order to accompany him to the melancholy residence of this unfortunate and oppressed family.

This she did; and promised to afford them every assistance in her power, personally, upon her return; and that in the mean time they might rely upon her son, and the female part of her own family, for every attention they could possibly administer in her absence.

The following day Mrs. Inglebert left town.

Adelaide and Henrietta accompanied Erasmus to the King's Bench prison, where Mrs. Devereux and her daughter now were—the one a prisoner, the other still remaining in a state of insensibility. Lord Orlington promised Erasmus his utmost interest for the lieutenant, and gave him a 100l. bank note, for the use of the family in whose behalf he had spoken so eloquently.

Every thing now appeared, in the opinion of Erasmus, so favourable to all his wishes,
that

that he began to consider his late apprehensions as created by his own fears, and less formidable than from his mother's peculiar manner of expression he had dreaded.

Several days had now passed without any thing particular occurring to interrupt the happiness Erasmus enjoyed from the society of Adelaide and his cousin.

Henrietta had long been his confident, having discovered the object of his affections by the interesting manner in which he had always spoken of her when in Germany.

This she had effected in the following manner :

As they were one day rambling alone together, she made a full stop—and in her usual whimsical manner suddenly addressed him with, “ Pray, Erasmus, do you love me ? ” “ Certainly, my fair cousin ! (replied Erasmus)

Erasmus) do you suppose it possible for any one to know you without loving you?"

" Ah! but that is not the question; my Lord tells me I must have you for an husband, and you must have me for a wife."

" Indeed!" exclaimed Erasmus, not quite with the rapture of a gratified lover.

" Why what's the matter now, coz.—you don't see a ghost, do you—you look so frightened? If that's the case I shall run away."

" Nonsense, Henrietta!—But when did my uncle say this?"

" Oh! a great many times, in England—in France—and now in Germany."

" And do you really wish me to become that character, Henrietta?"

" Not

“ Not if you love any one better than me, Erasmus. Do you?”

This ‘ Do you?’ she expressed with such archness and emphasis, that Erasmus paused for a moment, considering whether he should not at once declare his affections pre-engaged; but before he could answer her, the lively girl proceeded—

“ Come now, shall I tell you a secret? Yes! I will. You are in love coz. and—

“ Ah, Henrietta! who told you so?”

“ Don’t interrupt me, or I’ll run away. Where was I?—Oh! now I remember— You are in love, coz. and so am I:—but here is the difference; you know, and so do I—the name of the lady you love best—but I don’t know the name of the gentleman I love best.”

“ You

“ You talk in riddles, Henrietta. I do not understand whether you intend all this in jest, or whether you are really serious.”

“ What will you give me, Erasmus, to tell you?—Come then, to be serious—my Lord has several times mentioned this subject to me, as a matter by him long determined upon; though I should never have mentioned it to you, if I did not think *we* have likewise both determined not to abide by his determination. The manner in which you have always spoken of Adelaide Faulkner, assures me you love her better than me. Is it not so, Erasmus?—but before you reply I will promise to entrust the secret of my own heart to you, coz. and then we shall lose nothing by the exchange.”

“ Whether you give me this confidence or not, (replied Erasmus) I will frankly tell you I do love Adelaide; and know no
cause

cause why I should not avow it to the whole world."

"Now that is honest! Now you are a good natured kind coz.—and I will love you ten thousand times better than ever for this confession."

In this manner the playful girl ran on for some time; at last she informed him, that a few evenings previous to her leaving England, she had, in company with her aunt, Lady Charlotte Somerton, paid a visit to Mrs. Mountford, the widow of the late Colonel Mountford; and that preferring dancing to cards, she had for a partner a gentleman dressed in the naval uniform, whose manners and address particularly interested her. He did not appear (she said) to be more than one or two and twenty; but there was an expression of softness and melancholy in his countenance which at first irresistibly excited her pity, and induced her to be less giddy than usual, and to endeavour (either from humanity or caprice,
she

she could scarcely tell which, she said,) to amuse him. She succeeded; and they passed the greater part of the evening in conversation “upon subjects (continued Henrietta) I blushed to think I was so little acquainted with; they were chiefly literary and moral. His observations appeared, even to my uninformed mind, when he discoursed upon morals, so sensible and proper, and delivered in a style of language so pleasing—from its correctness, I have since discovered—that I was quite charmed; nor were the literary subjects he discussed, less interesting. Upon the whole, I thought him a new kind of creature from any I had ever before conversed with; though there was one omission I had a great mind to have thought unpardonable—he never paid me one compliment upon the beauty of my person—a subject which had hitherto been nearly the whole conversation of all my former beaux; however he made the amende honorable by praising what he denominated, the suavity of my disposition. He had just requested permission

to

to call upon me the following morning, and which I was about to have granted, when I was accosted by a gentleman who inquired after my father, by his title of Lord Orlington. The officer, upon hearing this, appeared rather embarrassed; and before there was an opportunity of saying another word, my aunt joined us, and informed me, the carriage waited. The gentleman who had interrupted my reply, offered his arm to my aunt, which was accepted, as did the officer to me; and just before I entered the carriage, he pressed my hand and said, (I thought with a sigh) he should long remember, and never cease to regret, the pleasures of the present evening—bowed, and I lost sight of him in a moment.

“ I waited at home all the following morning, but he never called. In the evening I saw Miss Mountford, and made some slight inquiry after my partner, but she knew nothing of him, further than he had been introduced

roduced at her mother's by his captain, the Honourable Charles Egerton, and since then I have neither seen or heard of him : and yet, Erasmus, the impression his interesting manner and delicate pleasing conversation then made upon my mind, is not, nor I think ever will be obliterated.

“ Since I have known you more intimately, my partiality to this unknown, is rather increased, for you have taught me to understand, and consequently to appreciate, the sciences, and the different subjects he that evening first gave me a relish for ; perhaps I might have transferred this esteem to my present preceptor, but I soon discovered your tone of voice, and the whole of your manner, was very different when you mentioned the name of Adelaide Faulkner, than when you discoursed with me upon other subjects, or when you address me individually—it is affectionate, but not so tremblingly soft as
that

that of the unknown I have just mentioned ; but I love you the better for that."

" I do not think I should be very miserable were I to marry any one whom I could esteem like him or you ; but, if possible, without incurring my father's displeasure, I intend to wait some years before I change either my name or situation. Do you think I am very wrong in this particular, Erasmus ?"

" Indeed, my fair cousin, (answered Erasmus) I cannot say you are very right, or very prudent, in such a determination ; unless you retain the recollection of this unknown, only as we study the best authors, as models to improve our judgments, or as criterions by which we decide upon the merit of similar productions."

Many of the like observations were by Erasmus bestowed upon his lively cousin and

the object of her prepossession, all equally wise, salutary, and prudent, as the elder part of my readers (if any such should perchance fall to my lot) would style them; or all equally dull, tedious, and vapid, as perhaps the youthful of both sexes may think proper in this age of *degeneracy* to denominate the one already given.

However, from the superiority of the mentor, Erasmus descended to the more equal and grateful character of the relative and the friend; and in confidence imparted to her many particulars, he would scarcely have thought prudent to have mentioned to so young a girl (then only sixteen) had he not been persuaded, that under an appearance of much levity and extreme thoughtlessness, she possessed naturally a strong understanding, though but little cultivated; and an heart and disposition, affectionate, generous, and sincere almost to a fault.

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The presence, therefore, of this lovely girl, was not the restraint his Lordship intended it should have been, upon the conversation of Erasmus and Adelaide; though in this instance restraint was entirely unnecessary, as not a word ever passed between them, which the most scrupulous or censorious could have construed into an impropriety, or an action that the whole world might not have witnessed.

Mrs. Inglebert had now been absent rather more than a week, when Lord Orlington, one morning upon breakfast being finished, requested Erasmus to favour him with his company for a few minutes in his study.

When they were seated, his Lordship began by observing, " You cannot be any stranger, nephew, to my long affection for you—my anxious solicitude to witness your abilities acknowledged and respected by the world—my intention of leaving you at my death the

whole of my property, which I can tell you is no trifling pittance, but nearly 70,000*l.* per annum—and my confidence in the rectitude of both your moral and political principles, when I add to all this my daughter Henrietta, whose virtues and many amiable accomplishments you are more able to describe, and do justice to, than I am. You will succeed to all my titles, and you will find I have neglected no opportunity of improving and extending either them or my fortune.”

“ It is my intention to quit London for ———, in a few days, on purpose to introduce you, by means of a public entertainment, to the electors and principal persons who possess influence in the county of ———, as their future representative, and as one who will merit their and my support, by a steady discharge of the trust reposed in him, according to the constitutional principles so often avowed by me, both in and out of parliament.

“ And

“ And now, nephew, let me say, I think with regard to your cousin, I have afforded you both time enough to become acquainted with the disposition of each other; and shall expect the ceremony to take place next month, on the same day that you compleat your twentieth year.”

His Lordship, after expatiating for some time upon the honours, emoluments, and personal advantages that would accrue to Erasmus, from a ready acquiescence with this and the other objects he wished to accomplish, concluded, and fixed his eyes so stedfastly upon his countenance, that had he been a Lavater, he must have read his very soul.

Erasmus, before he began, resolved to be explicit, and to leave nothing for conjecture : and though he felt a considerable degree of embarrassment, from the idea his uncle had been solely influenced in his attentions towards himself and the present arrangement of
o 3 affairs,

affairs, from a desire to promote the consequence, interest, and happiness of his family; yet as he proceeded and found, instead of this affectionate solicitude, that self-interest had alone actuated his Lordship, and that he was mean, selfish, treacherous, unprincipled, scurrilous, and deceitful, his courage rose in proportion as he was convinced he could not wound the susceptibility of a man incapable of cherishing a generous sentiment, or even expressing one, unless to answer some base purpose of his own.

A long and animated conversation now ensued; in which his Lordship reproached Erasmus with every invective the meanness of passion could produce, or which he thought likely to wound his feelings—spared neither his father's memory, nor his mother's conduct; and at last, in plain terms told him Adelaide was his own bastard, and he should claim the privilege of a parent to dispose of her as he thought proper; that he, Erasmus, should

should never see her again, or enter his house but as the husband of Henrietta Orlington; that he should expect, unless these terms were acceded to, the various sums he had advanced to him, and on his account, to be reimbursed; and that for the future he might expect to find him the bitterest enemy such base ingratitude as his could inspire.

All this was declared in language so coarse, and in a manner so unbecoming a relative or a gentleman, that at times Erasmus knew not what to answer, or whether to deign a reply to scurrility so unworthy of notice.

But when he mentioned and reproached his father's memory, Erasmus could with difficulty restrain his anger within the bounds of prudence. His eyes flashed fire—he suddenly started forward, and in a voice which made his coward uncle tremble, told his Lordship, that to the principles of that revered father, he was now alone indebted for his personal

sonal safety, or he would have trampled the wretch beneath his feet who should have dared to calumniate his memory. "Oh!" added Erasmus, with his hands clasped and his eyes raised towards heaven, "Oh! what a character was my father! How unlike your Lordship! He was a man of the most unblemished reputation; and his soul was alive only to the dictates of honour! He taught the truest, purest principles of virtue; and practised what he taught. He was my early instructor—the most affectionate—the most tender of parents—the best, the most virtuous of men! His precepts will never, I trust, be obliterated from my heart, or his injunctions from my memory: could they cease but for one moment to influence my conduct, that moment would be employed in dragging the vile traducer of his virtues into day, and compelling him to atone for the malignity of the calumny, by a public acknowledgment of its falsehood. But you, my Lord, are the brother of my mother—the father of my cousin; you
say,

say, with how much truth I know not, that you are also the father of my Adelaide—titles that of themselves would most effectually screen you from my vengeance, even did not my father's injunctions still influence my conduct; but he ever most sedulously inculcated, *that the implacable man cannot be a Christian*. To these considerations, and these principles, you are now, my Lord, alone indebted for my present personal forbearance; and that I do not expose you to the world for what you are—a mean, selfish, contemptible miscreant."

This vehement address, delivered with all the energy he was so capable of expressing, though it incensed his Lordship almost to madness, yet the conclusion reanimated him with sufficient courage to renew the attack, in the confidence, that *principle* would restrain his nephew from inflicting the punishment he most dreaded—personal chastisement, or being exposed to the world in the manner

manner his impolitic, ungovernable passion had now given Erasmus the opportunity of doing ; he therefore continued, and uttered so many irritating falsehoods, that Erasmus at last burst out of the room, and went in search of Adelaide and his cousin ; intending to have informed them of some part of the altercation, and to have persuaded Adelaide to return immediately to the protection of his mother.

He could not find them. Inquired of the servants, but none of them could inform him where they were gone, or any thing further than that when his Lordship retired, the carriage was ordered, and both went out together.

Erasmus, though anxious to meet the objects he now were in search of, yet determined not to hold any further conversation with his uncle, left the house ; but remained
in

in the square in the hopes of their speedy return.

He had walked for some time, when he observed his Lordship from the other side of the square, step into his carriage, which immediately drove off. This, as he knew Lord Orlington had an engagement about that hour, did not occasion him to leave the spot; but when one, two, and three hours had elapsed, and they did not return, he began to grow uneasy. He went to his uncle's—inquired whether they were come home—or if the servant could give him any information; and received for answer, “they had orders not to admit him, or answer any of his questions, should he call again, further than if he chose to write an apology, all might yet be well.”

This additional insult stung him to the soul. What! expose him thus to the servants!—it was too much. In a paroxysm of rage he left
the

the house, but continued in the square long after it was dark. He then began to suspect they were absent by the contrivance of his Lordship, and proceeded to the house of the nobleman to whom he had supposed him gone; but to his infinite vexation found he had not been there that day. In an agony of mind scarce to be conceived, much less described, he proceeded from one of his Lordship's acquaintance to a second, and this he continued without any tidings of them, until past eleven o'clock, when, quite worn out and exhausted with fatigue, having taken no refreshment from his breakfast, his cloaths wet and covered with dirt, he again called in Berkley-square; but was there informed none of the family were as yet returned. He said he would be assured of that from personal inspection, and advanced forward. The servant stopped him, and respectfully assured him it was as much as his place was worth to disobey his Lord's commands.

Erasmus

Erasmus was, however, too much agonized already to attend to further consequences—he forced his way into the house—examined every apartment—but no Adelaide—no Henrietta—no Lord Orlington—nor any intelligence could he gain, though he offered his purse several times over to the servants that were in the house. Not that any attachment to his Lordship occasioned their fidelity, for in his own family he was a compleat tyrant, and like all tyrants cordially detested. No! the servants could not betray their master simply because they were not in his confidence.

Erasmus at last returned to his apartments in Pall Mall, where we shall leave him for a short time, and endeavour to account for the absence of Henrietta and her fair friend.

The night before, just as they were retiring, Lord Orlington, with much apparent tenderness to both, informed them he had planned a

scheme for a party of pleasure, to take place on the following day, into which he intended to entrap Erasmus, without acquainting him with his intention until it was compleat. That as soon as breakfast was finished, he should invite Erasmus to his study—they were then to get ready—order the carriage, and desire the coachman to drive according to his directions—and that with Erasmus he would join them before dinner. He then saluted them and wished them good night.

The next morning his Lordship's plans, as far as they related to the two females, succeeded as we have already noticed, to the utmost of his wishes ; for they were gone, and he knew Erasmus was without any clue to trace their destination. So far his Lordship triumphed in his success, though his mind in other respects was torn by rage, hatred, revenge, and disappointed ambition.

When

When he left Berkley-square, he ordered the carriage to Kensington, and when near the gardens got out—carefully examined with a pocket telescope, that Erasmus was not in pursuit, and then ordered it on to ———, where Adelaide and Henrietta had been waiting for some time with great impatience. Both were much disappointed when they found his Lordship was not accompanied by Erasmus; but he accounted for his absence, by saying, he was himself rather vexed at finding his scheme less successful than he expected—Erasmus having previously promised to meet a party that day, on business relative to his mother's affairs.

They were now informed dinner was upon the table; which, when finished, his Lordship said he had something particular to impart to Adelaide, and desired his daughter to retire for a few minutes.

“ Adelaide (said his Lordship) you have long been anxious, I make no doubt, to learn the particulars of your birth, and to whom you are indebted for existence.” This sudden unexpected address—the subject to which it alluded—the circumstance of being left alone with a man, who from the first moment of her knowing him, had inspired an awe and a dread, she could not even yet entirely divest herself of: all combined to agitate her spirits to so great a degree, that she found herself incapable of replying otherwise than by a bow. His Lordship continued, “ But before I inform you of this, let me ask you one question, and remember I expect the truth, and that in a direct reply; *are you not in love, Adelaide.*” “ My Lord!” replied the trembling girl, with a look of the most expressive astonishment, and so extremely agitated as scarcely to be able to keep her seat.

“ Yes, Adelaide! (continued his Lordship) Yes! I know you are in love, and that
with

with my nephew, the heir of the Earl of Blis-sington, the son of your benefactress, and the destined husband of my daughter Henrietta. It is in vain to deny it—I saw you myself reclining upon his shoulder—and he with his arm circling your waist, declaring he lived for you alone; a pretty situation for a delicate, virtuous young lady, as I think they denominate you. This I saw; and when I entered and witnessed the disorder you were both in, he trumped up a terrible dismal tale about a family in great distress, but it did not impose upon me. I have ever since been determining upon revenge, and revenge I'll have depend upon it."

His Lordship now found he had proceeded rather too far, for the poor girl, overwhelmed by the variety of distressing sensations this abrupt and cruel declaration excited, heaved an hysteric sigh, and fainted. He did not choose to call for assistance, but had recourse to some spring water still remaining upon the
P 3 table,

table, with which he bathed her temples, and at last she opened her eyes. After a pause of a few moments, his Lordship addressed her with "You will do well, Miss, to attend to what I have to say, with a little more respect, and less of these affected airs. You have a father, Adelaide, and he still lives." "Oh! where, where? for God sake say where?" exclaimed Adelaide, clasping her hands in wild disorder. "Here! (his Lordship replied) Here, Adelaide! *I* am that father!"—Adelaide looked upon him for a moment with a steady countenance, and said, "You, my Lord!" and then, shaking her head, rapidly added, "Ah! no! no! no!—no, my Lord, you are not my father:" and fell upon the ground in strong convulsions.

It was in vain that his Lordship had recourse again to the water—she did not recover. At last he rang the bell violently. Henrietta and two servants entered the room together. "Adelaide, (said his Lordship) overcome

overcome by the heat of the room, and some particulars I were informing her of, relative to her parents, has fainted; endeavour to recover her—though I believe you must put her to bed; in the mean time I shall walk out, and return presently. But (continued his Lordship in a whisper to Henrietta)—but mind, at your peril either of you leave this house without my permission.” Henrietta looked grave—made no reply further than a bow, and his Lordship went out, in fact, to seek advice. This he obtained, and soon returned with a gentleman of the neighbourhood, a man of some skill: but the night passed, and Adelaide only recovered from one fit to relapse into another. Towards the morning she appeared to have dropped into a slumber, in which she continued nearly three hours, and then awoke, extremely languid, but perfectly sensible. The apothecary recommended her to remain quiet in her chamber for the remainder of the day, gave her a slight medicine, and took his leave.

Adelaide

Adelaide endeavoured to compose herself, and to comply with his recommendation; but she could not divert her thoughts a single moment from the occurrences of the preceding day, which the more she recollected, the more agitated she found herself. She several times inquired for Henrietta, but was only answered she must not converse. At last she desired to see Lord Orlington (or according to his new title, the Earl of Blissington); his Lordship, who had never left the room, now came forward. She wished to speak with him alone, she said—all were ordered to withdraw—but it was some time before the trembling girl could assume sufficient courage to begin; at last, with much difficulty, she addressed his Lordship as follows:

“ My Lord, the circumstances you yesterday began to recount, were of so distressing, so agonizing, so wonderful a nature, and so wholly unexpected by me, that they not only

only bewildered my mind at the time, but occasioned me to express myself, if I recollect right, in a manner I am extremely apprehensive must have greatly displeased your Lordship. For the past, I can only entreat your pardon, and that you will have the goodness to attribute it to the peculiar and embarrassing situation in which I was placed. But oh! my Lord, let me conjure you, by every thing most sacred, to relieve my mind from the torture of suspense in which your concluding declaration left it; and either confirm that intelligence, or expressly inform me (if you really know) of the names, and some further particulars relative to those sacred ties my heart has long in secret lamented its ignorance of, and sighed to acknowledge; but the mysterious silence of my revered benefactress, and the reluctance visible in her manner when the subject was ever mentioned by me, has, in a great measure, hitherto repressed my inquiries, and induced me to conceal within my own bosom, the wretchedness

ness I could not (notwithstanding the peculiar, the maternal tenderness I have constantly experienced from my beloved benefactress) some times avoid feeling, when I considered myself a destitute orphan, unacknowledged by a single relative, and without any of those ties in society all but myself enjoyed, and from which appeared to flow the chief advantages of life. With regard to the other circumstance to which your Lordship alluded, though unconscious as I am of any impropriety, or the smallest deviation from rectitude (and pardon the expression, my Lord, for I wish not to offend), undeserving as I am of the harsh construction and condemnation you yesterday passed upon my conduct, in the particular instance mentioned; yet be assured, my Lord, gratitude alone would be a sufficient inducement for me to sacrifice my own happiness a thousand times over, if that were possible, could I by such a sacrifice ensure the peace of mind, or the welfare of either, my more than mother; for

for to her, with my sainted benefactor, I am indebted for more than life—for the early principles of virtue—for instruction—for every good I have enjoyed, and for every evil I have escaped;—or that of the brother, for whom I have ever been taught alike by duty and affection, to cherish fraternal love, esteem and regard. And when to these considerations are added the duties incumbent from a daughter to a parent, be assured, my Lord, you have nothing to apprehend on account of any regard or pre-possession I may feel for him you then named; for I here most solemnly promise to act in this, and every other respect, if such is my duty, as your Lordship shall please to direct or consider as proper.”

“ So then, child, you are still in doubt (replied the unfeeling parent) whether to *me* you owe this obedience; and if you do, you then think proper to bargain with a father, and will only pay him so much obedience as
is

is agreeable to the reservation of ‘ *if* such is your duty ;’ and the knowledge of what *is* your duty, is I suppose to be ascertained by what you find to be your *inclination* ; a very pretty standard, truly, for a daughter to judge of the obedience due to a parent by ; but let me tell you, Adelaide, in this and every other respect (and his Lordship, in the hopes of terrifying her into a compliance, exalted his voice) *I will* be obeyed as a father, and that obedience shall be according to what *I* consider as right—not what my daughter shall please to dictate from the canting morality of a methodistical teacher—the lessons of a foolish woman—or the nonsense of a love-sick boy. Nay, whether I am your father or not, you shall be taught in this instance, implicit obedience to my commands, or never again return into the world.”

With the utmost difficulty this lovely, virtuous girl, preserved herself from relapsing into a similar state to that from which she was
but

but just recovered; for the variety of conflicting passions which now took possession of her bosom, almost overpowered her reason. To find a parent, after so many years lamenting in private her ignorance of the authors of her existence—to find that parent in the man she had from her first knowledge of him most dreaded—to find him so different in principles and manners, from those who had engaged and merited all her love, gratitude, and veneration—to find him at such a moment, and under such circumstances, and to experience no soothing tenderness, no rapturous expression of parental regard, no appearance of any thing but implacable dislike, and revengeful denunciations—were causes sufficient of themselves to have overpowered the firmest mind, possessed of any sensibility, even in health; how much more then, one, who almost from the first moment of her being capable of a reflection, or sensible of a kindness, had shared the affectionate solitudes of two such exalted

minds as Erasmus Inglebert and Georgiana Orlington, and experienced the delicate benevolent attentions of Sir John and Lady Griffiths—who had never suffered an inquietude these friends could shield her from, and accustomed to the unwearied tenderness and regard of her beloved brother, companion, friend, lover—Erasmus. Now torn (for what purpose she knew not) from these tender venerated friends—ill in body—distracted in mind—confined to a house she knew not where situate—and in the power of a man who called himself her father, but who appeared destitute of either tenderness or the common feelings of humanity—who threatened, that unless she complied with what he had not yet named, an eternal seclusion from the world.

The dreadful, agonizing sensations these various reflections and considerations occasioned in the mind of Adelaide, did indeed most poignantly incapacitate her for some
time

time from making any reply ; at last she recovered sufficient fortitude to ask his Lordship what were the commands he wished her to observe. He answered, to give up all influence over the affections of Erasmus, and to retire to one of his estates in Ireland. She then inquired what good or advantage would accrue, either to her benefactress or Erasmus, by her acquiescence. His Lordship replied, by enumerating all the fame, fortune, honours, and emoluments which Erasmus would acquire by uniting himself with Henrietta, and on the contrary described the beggary, infamy, and contempt which he would bring upon himself by an union with her—recounted every particular of her birth with the most circumstantial cruelty, leaving but little doubt upon her mind (from a late conversation that had passed between herself and Mrs. Inglebert) that these particulars were indeed very near, if not entirely the truth ; and after denouncing a most terrifying malediction upon her refusal, he demanded that she

should enter into a most sacred engagement at the altar, never to unite herself with Erasmus—declaring if she did not promise an immediate compliance with this, he would convey her himself to Ireland, and there confine her to one solitary apartment, where she should receive no other support than bread and water for the remainder of her life, and that, without the society, or ever more holding converse with a single human being: but that if she would enter into this engagement, and write two letters according to his dictation, one to his sister, and the other to Erasmus, she should then be at liberty to retire, either to the North of Ireland, Scotland, or Wales, or into any part of America; and he would agree to settle upon her a fortune of 400l. per annum, which should be entirely at her own disposal, with the liberty of adopting any mode of life agreeable to her own inclination.

His

His Lordship, by tenderness, and a different line of conduct, might have worked upon the susceptible disposition of this grateful girl, until he had succeeded to the utmost of his wishes; but the harsh unnatural method he had now adopted, and the cruel punishment he threatened to inflict upon her, unless she complied, though it terrified her, yet it increased her former dislike into utter abhorrence, and strengthened her resolution of withstanding his authority, until she could be guided in her final determination by the directions and wishes of her beloved benefactress.

She therefore, after his Lordship had repeatedly demanded her answer to his before-mentioned resolves, requested to be left a few moments alone, whilst she endeavoured to arrange her thoughts, and compose her mind to reply to the proposal he had made.

His Lordship sullenly left the room, and proceeded to the arrangement of his own plans. After a few minutes past in thought, he rang his bell—desired the servant to inform Lady Henrietta he wished to see her—and ordered the carriage to be got ready immediately.

Henrietta, long accustomed to her father's violent disposition, never in the first stages of his displeasure, ventured to oppose any of his commands; by which means she generally succeeded in diverting his ill-humour; and ultimately in effecting her own little schemes of pleasure, or the restoration to favour of such of the domestics as might have incurred his anger; but in the present instance, though she saw the storm gathering, she neither knew what had occasioned it, nor by what means to attempt to disperse it.

He ordered her to prepare herself for a journey, which she must perform alone, though

though he should join her in a few days ; and upon her making some inquiries about Adelaide, he sternly forbade her ever again mentioning that name in his presence, unless he first gave her permission so to do—and at her peril to enter her apartment. He then returned to Adelaide, to know the result of her determination.

This, after having first engaged him to promise that he would hear her to an end without interruption ; she acquainted him with in the following words :

“ That I wish, my Lord, by the most dutiful submission, to please and conciliate the regard of the parent to whom I am indebted for existence, I call the searcher of all hearts to witness—and that I will in every action of my future life, implicitly and with cheerfulness resign myself to the direction of him who shall be so entitled to my duty, I do most solemnly aver to be the truth : but then
allow

allow me, my Lord, (and I beseech your Lordship not to be offended at the request), allow me, my Lord, to be assured of the several circumstances your Lordship has related, either personally, or by letter, from my revered benefactress, and then, if she confirms this statement—if she declares her happiness and the happiness of her son, likely to be promoted by any sacrifice I can make, by my absence, or by my implicitly incapacitating myself from the possibility of my ever uniting myself to the esteemed object of my regard—for that I do most affectionately regard him, I scorn by a falsehood to deny. If, I say, my beloved benefactress desires this of me, I will then bind myself, by the most solemn engagement of which I have any knowledge, to conform to all their wishes—nay more, to seclude myself in any manner from the world, you or they shall in that case point out; but until then, neither my hand nor my heart shall voluntarily do any act
these

these beloved objects may afterwards reproach me for inconsiderately performing.

“ They, with my late revered benefactor, have been all the relatives I have ever known; they have been my protectors—my parents—my friends—my all of happiness hitherto upon earth: they ever taught me to pursue noble ends by noble means—to act conscientiously, and leave the result to providence: my *firm*, my *unalterable* resolution therefore is—that until these circumstances are confirmed by them, and I can be assured they wish me to act in the manner your Lordship has mentioned—not to enter into any engagement I cannot afterwards retract.”

Several times in the course of this speech, his Lordship had interrupted her with some violent exclamations, which he constantly concluded with, “ but proceed, and let us hear the end of your heroic determination;” and scarcely did he suffer her to finish the
last

last sentence, when in a paroxism of the utmost fury he started forward—and, but that his rage was inarticulate, would have invoked the aid of every infernal dæmon to have assisted him in his unnatural purpose of compelling her to an unconditional obedience to all he wished ; and as soon as he found words to express himself, he swore by every thing sacred and profane, he would subdue her haughty disobedient spirit, or lose his own life ; and at last so entirely did he resign himself to passion, that he struck her a most violent blow in the face, which threw her again into strong convulsion fits, from the effects of which it was more than a week before she was sufficiently recovered to be able to undertake the journey he meditated.

Here we shall leave his Lordship, and those involved in his schemes, whilst we look back upon the unfortunate Mrs. Devereux and her family ; and enter into some particulars relative to their history, as narrated by Dr. Elderton (the friendly physician).

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

“Those who, in consequence of superior capacities and attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, ought to be reminded, that nothing will supply the want of *prudence*; and that negligence and irregularity long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.”

DR. JOHNSON'S LIFE OF SAVAGE.

“COLONEL Devereux, the late husband of my friend (said Dr. Elderton) was the youngest son of Sir Christopher Devereux, a Baronet of considerable fortune in the West of England, who succeeded very early in life to the title and estate; and imbibed all the prejudices of his family with respect

respect to the right of primogeniture, and in consequence considered the establishment of his eldest son, and the splendor of his ancient house, of infinite more importance, than the happiness of the remainder of its branches—never troubling himself about the interests of his three other boys, further than to give them a good education, and procure them, as they respectively became of a proper age, some appointment, by which they were to make their way through the world.

“ The eldest of course was to take the whole patrimonial estate, amounting to nearly 12,000*l.* per annum. The second was brought up to the church, and succeeded to a very valuable living in the gift of his father. The third obtained a lucrative situation under government; whilst Charles (who from infancy had shared but very little the affections of his father, his birth having occasioned the death of his mother) received only a commission in the army.

“ Soon

“ Soon after being thus introduced into the world, he became acquainted with the Honourable Miss Darlington, niece to the Marquis of ———, with whom she then resided, and the chief of whose fortune it was intended she should have possessed.

“ The Marquis at this time was a bachelor of about fifty-eight, without any intention of marrying, and had selected as an husband for Miss Darlington, a young nobleman then making the tour of Europe—a very distant relation, but who, upon the event of the Marquis dying without any male issue, would have succeeded to the title and the entailed estate.

“ Charles and Miss Darlington had frequent opportunities of seeing each other, as the Marquis and Sir Christopher were near neighbours, and very intimate. Charles was extremely fascinating in his manners—handsome in person—of a remarkable cheerful,

lively disposition—and possessed a well cultivated understanding. His attentions, he soon found, were not received as disagreeable by Augusta, and after an acquaintance of a few months he summoned sufficient courage to inform her of the impression her charms had made upon his heart.

“ Miss Darlington, then only eighteen, was of a most amiable, benevolent disposition; had received from the lavish hand of nature a person regularly beautiful, and from education every accomplishment that could render her lovely in the estimation of the world: and had she been so fortunate as to have met in the man of her affections, one whose solidity of judgment and consistency of character, would have supported and confirmed her own, she might have been one of the most happy of women; but to the extreme thoughtlessness and instability of her husband, she has to attribute all the afflictions her family have so poignantly endured.

“ When

“ When Charles found his affection returned with reciprocal ardour, he exerted his utmost eloquence to persuade her to a private marriage, and at last succeeded. This could not long be kept secret—when discovered, it almost drove the Marquis frantic, and in a violent passion he vowed she should never again enter his house, or be considered by him as a relative; and to this resolution he but too fatally adhered.

“ Sir Christopher, on the contrary, only observed, when Charles informed him of his marriage, ‘ Very well ! very well, young man ! you will please to recollect that as you have acted thus without consulting me, the little estate you possess in right of your mother, and your commission, is all you will ever receive from me ; and further, you must now look out for an establishment of your own, as I do not intend to take upon myself the support of your future family.’

“ Charles, however, happy in the possession of his lovely amiable bride, cared but little either for the displeasure of the Marquis—the loss of wealth—or the indifference of his family ; the last of which he had been so long accustomed to experience, that it now gave him scarcely any concern.

“ Both young, they entered life with vivid expectations ; and, without considering the smallness of their income, entered into most of the fashionable extravagance of the times. The only fortune Mrs. Devereux could now expect to receive, was 5000*l.* which by her father’s will was to be paid upon her coming of age—all that at his death he had left to bequeath, from a once splendid fortune, chiefly dissipated upon the turf.

“ The accumulation of debts, and the demands of trades-people, which now began to be exceedingly troublesome, at last brought them to a proper sense of their situation ;
and

and after having passed two years in scenes of gaiety (though only according to the style of life they had previously been accustomed to) they were all at once called upon for the payment of such large sums, as induced them seriously to consider the means by which in future they were to support their establishment.

“ Mrs. Devereux had now completed her twenty-first year, and her husband received her fortune of 5000*l.*; with this she urged him to discharge the several demands against them, and found, when he had so done, that no more remained than 800*l.* which, with his commission and his little estate before mentioned, were all they had now for their future support. This was very inadequate to their then style of living, which for the two years past had exceeded 2500*l.* per annum.

“ During the first eighteen months, the interest of the 5000*l.* having been regularly paid, as had also the rents of his own 200*l.* per annum, which his steward informed him had received a trifling increase by a life lease expiring much sooner than could have been expected, and by which event he received, as a fine upon the renewal, 250*l.*—the tradespeople had been kept quiet, by occasional payments towards the discharge of their bills; but when the next quarter passed, and they found their bills greatly increasing, without any thing being discharged, they grew clamorous, and one man in particular was so exceedingly insolent to Mrs. Devereux, that she was determined to exert her utmost influence with the captain to alter their mode of life.

“ This was no easy task, but she at last succeeded; and fortunately for them, when they began to form these resolutions, the spring was far advanced. Captain Devereux,

reux, therefore, took a small cottage some little distance from the metropolis—furnished it elegantly—and as soon as the birth-day was over removed to it; this enabled them to retrench without experiencing the sneer of ridicule, or the lessons of wisdom the more affluent have always to bestow upon these occasions; and accordingly by this means they were enabled to lay down their equipage, discharge several superfluous servants, and part with the remainder of their furniture in town.

“ I should have mentioned, that some time before this event took place, Mrs. Devereux had presented her still doating husband, with a beautiful girl, the present Augusta, and there was every reason to expect a further increase of their family.

“ In the October of this year, 1772, our friend the lieutenant was born; and early in the next year I had the pleasure of first becoming

coming acquainted with them, as they resided in the same neighbourhood, though still adhering to their æconomical style of living.

“ The dispute with America soon after this became too serious for adjustment, and troops were ordered for foreign service. Among those who formed the first expedition, was the regiment in which Captain Devereux held his commission. He departed—experienced many vicissitudes—was promoted to the rank of Colonel, and in the year 1780 was joined by Mrs. Devereux, who remained with him until his return to England in 1784.

“ They again settled in London, and his brother William, who was now in an official department of still greater importance than when the Colonel left England, began to visit him, and to express more regard for him and his family, than in the former part of his life he had

had ever been accustomed to do. After some further intercourse, he became remarkably attached to Charles, who at this time was a fine lively boy, continually inventing some strange device or another; by which, and his mad pranks, he amused, and gained so greatly on the favour of his uncle, that William proposed to the colonel to take the care of his education, and his future interests, entirely upon himself—to make some provision for him out of his own fortune—and finally, upon his return from the University, to introduce him to the notice of administration as his own private secretary.

“ The colonel now again launched into a style of splendid living his income could not properly be supposed to admit of; but he quieted the alarms of his lady, by assuring her he not only expected to provide for Charles through the interest of his brother, but also to get into parliament, and to receive an appointment in his own line more than

than adequate to every expence which, in order to secure these advantages, he was now incurring.

“ In 1787 he was returned for the borough of ———, but his other expectations were never realized, for in the succeeding year he differed with administration upon the question of the regency, and in consequence not only lost their favour, but that also of his brother; who soon after gave him to understand, that unless the measures were supported, upon which they once agreed, he should not only discontinue all intercourse with him, but withdraw his protection from Charles.

“ The colonel, too proud to submit to the dictation of a brother, and hoping still greater advantages from the prospects he now had in view, continued his opposition, and lost all his former friends.

“ He

“ He was now left to struggle with many pecuniary difficulties his brother’s assistance had hitherto preserved him from ; but these he in time became habituated to, as from his parliamentary situation he was under no apprehensions for his personal freedom.

“ Among those whom a similarity of political sentiment now brought to his table, was Sir William Clementson, the villain whose name you have so often heard mentioned ; I shall, therefore, be rather particular in my description of his person and character. In the first is united all that we can conceive of manly beauty ; and in the last, all that we can possibly suppose of moral depravity. His manners, and his principles, are formed upon the Chesterfieldian plan—nay, he even exceeds that *accomplished model of simulation*, in the fascination of his address, which in public, and with those he wishes to impose upon, is calculated to gain all hearts ; and in the dazzling eloquence of his language, which is in
general

general so very brilliant as "to make the worse appear the better cause."

"He will discourse upon virtue with such apparent reverence, admiration, and feeling, as would lead you to suppose him better calculated for the next, than the present world. In fact, he is a compound of all that can please the eye—mislead the understanding—or debase the heart.

"The beauty and unaffected sweetness of disposition of the lovely Augusta Devereux, attracted the notice of this modern Lathario, and induced him to seek the possession of so charming a girl, who is now but the shadow of her former self: indeed at that period, she was all that "fable ever feign'd, or youthful poets fancy when they love."

"To seek her upon any other terms than marriage he knew to be fruitless; for though the deserved esteem in which both Mrs. De-

vereux

vereux and her daughter were held, for propriety of conduct, would not have deterred him from hazarding the attempt, yet the presence of the colonel rendered such a scheme wholly impracticable. For Sir William too well knew the high spirit and daring impetuosity of Colonel Devereux, to suppose he would suffer any one to affront, much less injure his family with impunity; besides, of all men living no one has a greater aversion to fighting than Sir William Clementson. These considerations, therefore, induced him to solicit the colonel's permission to address his daughter. His overtures were received with much satisfaction by the colonel, and scarcely with less pleasure by Mrs. Devereux and the lovely object of his attentions.

“ You will excuse me, I am sure (continued Dr. Elderton), if I detain your attention a few minutes by some faint description of what Augusta Devereux was at this period. Then just entering her eighteenth year, her

person was tall, elegant, and finely proportioned, with every feminine accomplishment, and every advantage of education: and to the brightest powers of the intellect, she joined the softest affections of the heart, and so perfectly sincere was she in herself, that she could scarcely be persuaded that duplicity was so common a vice as is generally represented. In short, she was generous and benevolent to those over whom she had any controul, or who required the aid of her purse, or the compassion of her heart; and in her intercourse with the rest of the world, she was mild, amiable, and sincere; with a disposition calculated to be, and to render all around her, happy. How easy, then, was it for the specious, fascinating Sir William, to impose upon the tender, unsuspecting disposition of so artless a character; and by the semblance of virtues he did not possess, and the pretended ardour of an attachment kindled only by irregular desire, to gain the genuine affections of her

her heart, and at last to be considered as the dearest object to her in existence."

Williams, at this part of the narrative, uttered some violent execration against the villanous conduct of Sir William; and seemed to hint a surprise that the virtuous Augusta Devereux should have suffered her affections to have become attached to a man destitute of all pretensions to moral rectitude.

" You forget, my friend, (continued Dr. Elderton, that at this time he appeared to her not more distinguished by personal attractions, than for mental endowments; and that he was the simulating villain, who, under the mask of the purest principles, aspired to her regard in the most open honourable manner, sanctioned by the recommendation of her parents. So truly honourable did his conduct appear, that when the colonel at last frankly informed him he had no fortune to give her, he expressed the utmost satisfac-

tion—said he was happy he had now an opportunity of proving his affections, were not guided by sordid interest; and added, ‘ I shall immediately give orders to my attorney to draw the settlements, and they shall be as liberal as my love.’ This little incident you may be assured raised him in the esteem of the whole family, and appeared to Augusta the most convincing proof of the influence she possessed over his affections, that he could possibly have demonstrated.

“ Just at this period the dissolution of parliament took place, and left the colonel at the mercy of his creditors, unless he could again get returned.

“ This he attempted, but was opposed not only by a man of superior fortune, but also of superior influence. The contest was violent and expensive, and though he had all Sir William’s interest, terminated in favour of his competitor. This completed the measure
of

of his misfortunes ; for in the hopes of securing his election, and in order to support it with the greater spirit, he had sold his commission—the only means remaining by which he could raise a guinea ; for, unknown to his family, he had long before this period mortgaged his little estate to the very utmost : he was therefore now left literally without any support—in momentary dread of an arrest ; and to which was added, the agonizing reflection that his own folly, and imprudent style of living, had reduced his family to complete indigence.

“ He was at the George at ———, when these torturing reflections obtruded themselves—thought succeeded to thought, until to lose the remembrance he swallowed down burgundy by bumpers. Whilst in this state his servant entered, and informed him, that two men, very much intoxicated, had boasted, but a few minutes before, they only waited to learn the final result of the poll, in

order to secure him—as one of them had a writ in his pocket for that purpose, at the suit of Mr. ———; ‘this (said the servant) induced me to ply them with additional liquor, until I was persuaded they could not harm your honour; I then left them—saddled your horse, and if I might humbly advise, you will lose no time in quitting this, for some other county; whilst I will remain and take care of the men. The colonel took the advice—mounted his horse, and rode full speed for ———. He had not proceeded far, before he heard the clatter of horses behind him—turned his head, and saw men (as he supposed) in pursuit. He left the high road—redoubled his speed—crossed the country—came to a seven barred gate—and repeatedly spurred his horse to leap it. The poor beast endeavoured—failed in the attempt, and threw the colonel with such force against a post at a small distance, that it fractured his scull, and dislocated his neck. No one being near to afford him any assistance, he expired upon the spot.

“ Thus

“ Thus terminated the existence of a man, who, had he but exerted the natural superiority of his mind, and conducted his affairs with common prudence, or limited his expences to his income, might have enjoyed with his family many years of the truest felicity :—but accustomed from infancy to associate chiefly with the first ranks in society, and to behold every thing around him luxuriantly magnificent—then sacrificed to the unjustifiable prejudice of giving every thing to the first born, in order to support the *dignity* of the family, whilst its youngest was left to make his way through the world with scarcely nothing in comparison to his brother—he had contracted so strong an habit for shew and expence, that, ambitious of appearing of equal consequence with his relative connections, he sacrificed his reputation, his peace of mind, and ultimately his life, in the pursuit of a shadow—and, in fact, to his extravagances may be attributed every distress, and every calamity, his family have since so poignantly endured.

CHAP. XVII.

“ By honour’s dictates unrestrain’d,
By faith nor justice sway’d;
That confidence his vows obtain’d,
His perfidy betray’d.”

HENRY and ELIZA, a Ballad.

“THE Colonel (continued Dr. Elderton) was soon afterwards discovered in this situation by some countrymen—they conveyed him to an inn, where there happened to be some of the electors who had voted in his favour, and who recollected his person. By this means his faithful servant came to the knowledge of his master’s fate, and informed his mistress of the event. This dreadful unexpected calamity, almost deprived Mrs. Devereux

vereux and her daughter of their reason : but they hastened to the fatal spot, and gave the necessary directions for his funeral.

Sir William was at this time at a distant part of the kingdom, exerting his utmost influence to carry his own election for the county he had represented in the former parliament ; and had only succeeded the day before he received the information of the colonel's death. He immediately set off post ; but when he arrived, found that Mrs. Devereux and her daughter (who did not expect him as yet for several days) were departed with the corpse, for the purpose of interment. He followed, and entered the church-yard just time enough to witness a scene which had agonized the feelings of every spectator present. Part of the service had been performed, and the corpse was about to have been let down, when two men pushed forward, stopped the ceremony, and arrested the dead body for a very considerable sum.

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The distraction of the wife and daughter may be conceived, but cannot be described. Both appeared to sink beneath the suddenness of the blow ; Mrs. Devereux looked the statue of fixed horror and despair—clasped her hands, but was for some time unable to utter a word : whilst poor Augusta for the first time was seized with violent hysteric fits. Their situation was compassionated by every one present, and so enraged were some of the country people at the brutal behaviour of the men, that they were about to have attempted a rescue, when Sir William came up. He interposed—flew to Augusta—assisted to recover her—requested of the clergyman an explanation of the circumstances that had occasioned the scene he witnessed—learned the cause—took a hand of Mrs. Devereux—assured her she might rely upon his friendship, and that she had nothing further to dread on the present account ; that if she would endeavour to regain sufficient composure, and attend to the recovery of her daughter, the
service

service should immediately proceed; and, turning to the men, pledged himself for the payment of the debt. ‘Never,’ said Mrs. Devereux, (from whom I had these particulars, continued Dr. Elderton) ‘never did Sir William appear to greater advantage than at this moment—so soothing was his language—so respectful his behaviour—so delicate, so assiduous his attentions; that they not only alleviated the anguish of my mind, but excited in me such ardent gratitude, that I could have knelt, could almost have worshiped the man who then appeared to me as an Angel of Heaven, sent to extricate us from a scene of misery the most bitter I had ever as yet experienced.’ After a considerable time spent in fruitless endeavours to recover Augusta, she was conveyed by some females to a small distance from the spot,—the service proceeded, and the colonel was at last interred. Mrs. Devereux and Sir William then hastened back to the house with Augusta: who, when she recovered her recollection, found herself supported

supported in the arms of Sir William; and her mother standing on one side. She looked upon both for a moment, with a countenance which expressed apprehension, terror, and surprise: but Sir William instantly relieved her from the torture of suspense—tenderly hinted at the happy termination which had taken place, and declared how inexpressibly fortunate he thought himself in having had an opportunity of shewing his friendship for his departed friend—sympathized with her for some time on the loss he as well as they had sustained—then endeavoured to reanimate her drooping spirits by the most affectionate assurances of unalterable love, and the most soothing, delicate attentions—and after spending the evening with them in this manner, retired, though not till he had informed Mrs. Devereux he would undertake to settle all the colonel's affairs; and that he expected to receive, by the return of post, the writings which he had ordered to be prepared as a settlement upon his beloved Augusta.

“ When

“ When he was gone, Mrs. Devereux informed her daughter of the several foregoing particulars, and extolled the generosity and delicacy of Sir William, in terms of the warmest admiration. Augusta's heart overflowed with gratitude and affection; and she thought her whole life would be too short a period ever to repay so ardent, so disinterested an attachment.

“ Sir William now spent most of his time in their society, and in giving them proofs of his love and friendship. One morning, a few weeks after the funeral, he entered, and by his countenance, which at all times possesses much animation, but now glowed with superior intelligence and satisfaction, convinced them he had something to impart, he was aware would afford them pleasure. He requested to speak with Mrs. Devereux alone, and then said, he had the exquisite happiness of being able to inform her of the entire arrangement of all his late friend's affairs—

that the house and furniture in town were now her own—that his attorney had sent the settlements properly prepared for filling up and signing, which he shewed her—and added, that he had a commission in his pocket for Charles (who, said Dr. Elderton, was just returned express from France, having began the tour of Europe a few months before his father's death)—then pressing her hand, he bowed, said he would be there again in the evening, and departed—leaving Mrs. Devereux to inform Augusta of these particulars, who he was well convinced would feel the delicacy of this behaviour more forcibly than if he had himself undertaken to acquaint her with the generosity of his conduct.

“ The evening came, but it was rather late, and Sir William had not as yet made his appearance. An acquaintance had called, and taken tea; to this friend Mrs. Devereux imparted some of the particulars of the late events, declaring how grateful to providence she

she felt, in having the consolation of knowing, that should death even immediately remove her from her beloved children, *their* prospects were now enlarged; her Augusta would be united to a worthy affectionate husband, who would study to render her happy, and her boy would have in him a steady friend, ever ready to promote his interests. They then all joined in extolling the munificence, delicacy, and worth, which distinguished the character of this disinterested lover.

“ Sir William, at last, was announced. He was received with the most evident satisfaction by Mrs. Devereux and her friend; and by Augusta with a degree of modest timidity, and affectionate gratitude, that greatly added to the beauty of her person.

“ After some time past in general conversation, which Sir William supported with great spirit, he inquired if any of them were disposed for a walk. Mrs. Devereux and her

friend said, that as it was so long since they had enjoyed the society of each other, they would prefer being left *tête à tête*—but recommended Augusta to embrace the opportunity of enjoying the fineness of the evening. Augusta but too fatally acceded to this advice, which gratitude and misplaced confidence in the honour of a villain, had induced the unsuspecting mother to give her daughter, and Sir William departed with the lovely, virtuous girl, who smiled as she pressed her mother's hand, and appeared perfectly happy. Alas! little suspecting that it was the last time she would ever look upon her parent with the confidence of unsullied innocence.

“ They went into the garden, and walked on, apparently without intending any particular direction, until they found themselves at the door of a small summer-house, into which they entered. Sir William seated Augusta, and then with the most studious delicacy, entered into an history of his feelings, lamented
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the delay which the death of his *venerated* friend had occasioned to his happiness—pressed her to consent to bless him with her hand before the expiration of the customary twelve months, and urged his suit with such tenderness of expression, and such fascination of address, that the lovely girl thought herself too blessed in possessing the affections of a man apparently so superior in virtues and accomplishments to the generality of his sex. She remembered the scene in the churchyard—reflected that his love and generosity had extricated them from the dreadful situation of beholding the remains of a beloved parent denied a decent burial—reflected upon all that he had since done—upon the ample provision he had made for her in case of his death, as mentioned in the settlements—and was particularly pleased with the proof of his attachment to her family in the affair of the commission. She attributed all this chiefly to his affection for herself, and nearly overcome by the variety of sensations these reflections

tions gave rise to, the affectionate solicitude of his behaviour, and the consideration of what must, have been their situation but for his interposition—her head sunk upon his shoulder, and her eyes swam in tears.

“ Sir William affected to be exceedingly alarmed—pressed her to declare the cause; and from all she said, was persuaded that the then most predominant passion of her mind was *ardent gratitude*. This was the point to which all his views, since the death of her father, had been directed. He now saw that but little remained to compleat his triumph, and eagerly pursued the propitious moment—soothed her with words of tenderness—lulled asleep all suspicion, and at last, profiting by the opportunity, “ robbed her of that which not enriched him, but made her poor indeed.”

“ You must permit me (continued Dr. Elderton) to pass over in silence the horror and remorse which seized the mind of the wretched

wretched Augusta, when reason resumed her reign, and awakened her to the bitter recollection of the reality of her situation: nor will I insult your ears with a repetition of the sophisms by which Sir William attempted to gloss over the crime into which his base seductive arts, and hypocritical pretensions to truth, honour, generosity, and virtue, had betrayed the innocent girl; and by which he further endeavoured to impose upon her understanding. The most specious of his arguments, and by which he at last succeeded in stilling the violence of her grief, was—that, had the ceremony of the church previously taken place, their conduct would not either by God or man be deemed reprehensible—that no ceremony could more solemnly unite them in the sight of heaven than he considered they were already—why then needlessly afflict herself, or harshly condemn as criminal, what no laws, human or divine, ever thought of questioning the propriety? adding, “are you not mine, my Augusta! by ten thousand solemn

VOWS

vows registered in heaven—by the affection I so ardently feel for you, and which you have again and again blessed me with the assurance it was returned with reciprocal ardour—by the engagement I entered into with your departed parent—and by this last, this most endearing proof of mutual love and boundless confidence? What then, my angel, prevents us from immediately ratifying at the altar, with our hands, the solemn engagement of our hearts?—what! but a mere punctilio, which, I am confident, had the dear departed object of our grief been capable of expressing a wish before he quitted this life, it would have been, that we should not pay any attention to this very punctilio. Suffer me, then, to endeavour to gain your beloved mother's consent to our immediate union, and to hasten every thing necessary for the occasion; a few weeks need then only elapse before I fully confirm the vow I have so often made, and now again most solemnly repeat—to live for you alone: then shall I be in the sight of man, what I

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now am in the sight of heaven—your fond, your adoring husband; then will I present you to the world, as the most inestimable treasure I possess—as the wife of my soul. What more, my angel, can I say, to prevail with you to lay aside these ungentle thoughts, and to remove from your bosom the erroneous supposition that you have done any thing deserving of the harsh condemnation you have passed upon yourself? Speak, my love! and let me fly to execute your wishes.”

“ The ‘ ungentle thoughts’ to which Sir William alluded, were—that Augusta in the first bitterness of her grief, had declared her resolution to acquaint her mother with her guilt, and then to retire from the world, in the hope, that by a life of the most rigid penitence, to atone to heaven for the error of her conduct.

“ But his delusive arguments, and captivating address—which were tender, passionate, impressive, or soothingly persuasive, as
he

he thought either best calculated to answer his purpose, at last succeeded in restoring her mind to some degree of composure, and the grief and compunction she at first most poignantly felt, now gave place to the fallacious hope—that, as she had not intentionally transgressed, and as Sir William promised her the only reparation he could possibly make, (and she had no reason to doubt his sincerity, for were not the settlements already prepared) and she intended by the strict rectitude of her future life, to atone as much as was in her power for the past—though their conduct had been faulty, they were not intentionally criminal, and consequently not so guilty as at first she had imagined.

“ These reflections, and this hope, enabled her to return to her mother without immediately betraying the important secret. But such are the apprehensions of conscious guilt, particularly upon a first deviation, that every look alarms, every question agitates, and every

every movement is considered as preparatory to detection, disgrace, and infamy. So it was with Augusta.

“ She had long been accustomed to consider her parent as her friend, and to confide to her faithful bosom, every thought and secret of her own. But now! what an alteration had a moment of guilt effected. She did not dare to look upon that countenance which had never yet been turned upon her with a frown—she averted her eye, for the smile with which her mother welcomed her return, was a reproach she could not endure, and when she attempted to speak, her voice faltered. Mrs. Devereux noticed this sudden alteration, and with the most anxious tenderness inquired if she was unwell. Augusta complained of a severe head-ache—and for fear of entering into a conversation that might possibly lead to an explanation, requested to retire. Mrs. Devereux said she thought they had been rather indiscreet in having stayed

stayed out so late. The word ‘indiscreet,’ struck Augusta like an electrical shock, as she had not attended to the construction of the sentence—and with the most trembling apprehension, she hastily replied, ‘*Indiscreet, mamma!*’ ‘Yes, my dear! (answered Mrs. Devereux) was it not rather indiscreet in you to encounter the night air, when you know it always occasions you the head-ache? but (smiling) I suppose it was principally your fault, Sir William?’ This he very readily admitted, bowed, and took his leave.

“ Augusta then retired, but not to rest—alas! that blessing fled her bosom never more to return, and remorse usurped its place. For now left without the support Sir William’s presence, and delusive reasoning, had afforded her when they were together, she entered into a retrospection of the past, and most poignantly felt the culpability of her conduct. Yet oh! how comparatively light and trifling the sorrow and compunction she
now

now felt, to that which agonized her bosom when she could no longer mistake the base designs of the simulating, accomplished villain, who, when he found week succeed to week, and all his eloquence and his arts ineffectual to induce her to repeat the deviation—when he could neither succeed by the fascination of his address, nor the sophistry of his arguments—upbraided her with a want of confidence in his honour, and vowed he did not believe she had ever felt the affection for him she professed, or she could not thus refuse to bless him with a proof of her regard. These repeated solicitations, and the delay which had greatly exceeded her expectations, lessened him in her esteem, and rendered her wretched indeed ; though she had as yet only replied with her tears, pressing him to hasten their union, when he would find her the most grateful of wives. Nearly two months had passed in this manner, and he had attempted by insensible degrees to shake her religious opinions—sometimes by brilliant strokes of

wit, and at others by expressing his admiration of particular passages of scripture, which he would immediately observe, could only be of divine origin, as they were *too absurd* to be of human; a common place argument with those who wish to depreciate the truths of christianity, without immediately losing their own reputation as moral and good men. This kind of conversation he was continually, though cautiously introducing, until at last thinking he had sufficiently prepared her mind for any scepticism, and concluding from her silence (which grief and consternation had occasioned) that he might with safety proceed—he continued—assured her that marriage was only a civil institution for the more legal protection of property, and never solemnized at the altar until a very late period—that to those who could confide in the honour of each other, it was a very needless ceremony—generally the grave of happiness, as it left nothing to the honour and affection of the parties themselves, but bound them to the performance

performance of that, which the very idea of being so bound, rendered them careless, and indifferent as to the preservation of by affection. He proceeded in this style, until he fully avowed himself and his principles; which were and are the most licentious you can imagine.

“ Augusta, at last, would have been unable, from grief and resentment, properly to have answered his libertine solicitations, had he not further attempted to ascertain the stability of her former principles. She then summoned all her courage, and in the most pointed language reproached him with the duplicity and baseness of his conduct. He had now proceeded too far to recede; he, therefore, with the most unblushing effrontery, endeavoured to gain by violence and the meanest threats, what he found every blandishment he could offer, ineffectual to obtain. This so completely disgusted the native delicacy of her mind, that she almost instantly determined to

encounter every disgrace and misery her past misconduct could expose her to, than unite herself to a man, the most vile, the most contemptible of human beings. She restrained for a moment the extreme anguish of her mind, whilst with the most decisive firmness she assured him, it was now equally beyond the power of his wealth to purchase, or his love to regain her good opinion, or both united, to prevail with her to contaminate her mind, by participating his guilty affluence: even if he would immediately renew his former professions of honourable love. ‘No! (said this still virtuous girl) No! rather will I submit to the world’s contumely, and the reproaches of my own conscience, bitter as both must be, than consent to unite myself with so despicable a wretch as I now, and ever shall, Sir, consider you.’ As he was persuaded from her firm manner he had nothing further to hope, he gave a loose to the rage he now felt, in finding himself foiled by a girl, and one too, who he considered as so completely

completely in his power ; and vowed that he would immediately expose her character to the scorn and contempt of the whole world—would make it known in every circle he entered, and to every friend and relative she possessed, that he had already triumphed over that rigid propriety of conduct, which had hitherto been held up to the admiration of the world as an example for others to imitate.

“ Mrs. Devereux, who was from home with her son the afternoon when this *eclaircissement* took place, just returned time enough to witness its termination ; for, having in her way home, passed the garden door, and finding it open, she took that direction to the house, and was just about to have entered the parlour, when she overheard the concluding part of Sir William’s threat—paused a moment, and distinctly heard Augusta peremptorily desire him to leave the house and never enter it again. Mrs. Devereux then opened the door, and Sir William, the mo-

ment he saw her, turned to Augusta, bowed, and, before Mrs. Devereux could demand an explanation, with the most perfect composure bade them good day.

“ The courage by which Augusta had been enabled to repel the unmanly aggressor, and support herself during his stay, now forsook her, when her mother entreated to know what had occasioned the dispute with Sir William; the latter part of which she informed her she had overheard. Poor girl! the conflict of contending passions which now took possession of her bosom, were alike too powerful for her strength and her reason, and she fell from her seat to the ground in a fit. The usual means were tried to recover her, but without success—she was put to bed, and very soon exhibited every symptom of a brain fever, which at last terminated in a confirmed derangement. At first her frequent ravings about Sir William but too fatally convinced them of the truth, or at least that something dreadful

dreadful to her peace, in which he was concerned, had occasioned it. For several days they kept her brother from seeing her: but he suspecting from the absence of Sir William, the reserve of his mother, and the caution observed in keeping him from the sight of his sister, that all was not right, took an opportunity of ascertaining the truth, by going into her apartment, during a moment's absence of his mother and the nurse, and there heard sufficient to confirm his fears, and to induce him to believe Sir William one of the most consummate of villains. Charles, who doated upon his sister, could not endure a moment's suspense. Without acquainting his mother, either with his suspicions or his intentions, he went in search of Sir William, who he found had settled his bills two evenings before, and was gone no one knew where. He returned home—informed his mother he should be with her again the following morning, when he hoped to find his sister better—mounted his horse, and reached London the same evening.

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The first person he saw, upon alighting in town, was a most intimate friend, of whom he inquired if he had seen any thing of Sir William Clementson within the last few days; his friend shook his head, and said, he supposed he was come to seek satisfaction of the villain. Charles, pale, and scarcely able to support himself, inquired why he should suppose so; the other replied, because he had heard some very unpleasant circumstances whispered. An explanation took place, and Charles, to his inexpressible affliction, found his sister's character already irretrievably blasted. He sought the wretch who had done this, but he, hearing of his arrival in town, and apprehensive of the consequences, waited not a moment; but immediately left the kingdom. Charles would have followed him, but could not learn to what part of the continent he was gone; one said France, another Germany, whilst a third believed he had passed over into Holland. Sick of life—without the pecuniary means of travelling far, and almost despairing

despairing of immediately overtaking him— Charles gave up the pursuit, and returned to his parent. Reserve was now no longer possible. He therefore informed his mother of the object and result of his journey, and declared his determination to cancel, as far as in his power, every obligation Sir William had apparently conferred. He resigned the commission—sold the fee simple of the mortgaged estates—and, by desire of Mrs. Devereux, was about to have engaged an auctioneer to sell the house and furniture in town, for the purpose of returning the monies advanced by Sir William at the funeral and otherwise, when to his infinite surprise he found men already in possession of every thing—and was informed by Sir William's attorney, he had directions to enforce to the utmost, the payment of two bonds given by the late Colonel Devereux, for 1000*l.* each. This was wholly unexpected, and occasioned him much distress, as he was apprehensive the house and furniture would sell but for little more than the

the 2000l. and in consequence they must still remain considerably indebted to Sir William. He again returned to his mother, in a state of mind wretched in the extreme; but here he found still greater afflictions to encounter, for scarcely had he finished the relation of these particulars to his mother, when men arrived, who informed them they were empowered to take possession of the house, grounds, dead and live stock, with the furniture, and every individual article they could find upon the premises, and requested them to remove to another habitation. They were now compleatly destitute—not an article left of all they had formerly possessed—without a home—without a friend to receive them—or the means of future support; and to add to their distress, poor Augusta appeared to be getting worse instead of better. But to complain was useless—they had no alternative. They were obliged, therefore, to seek a lodging, and at the hazard of her life, to remove the dear unfortunate ill-treated Augusta, who remained
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in this deplorable state for near six months, and then slowly recovered.

“ Mrs. Devereux had, during this interval, written to all her relations and friends—many of them never answered her letters at all; and of those who did—some affected to pity, others to condemn, and all gave her to understand, that however they might feel disposed to assist her at a distance, they could not again countenance either her or her daughter in public. From none of these would Mrs. Devereux accept the smallest favour, though at this period they were suffering every distress that indigence and sickness could inflict.

“ Thus rejected by their relations—deserted by their friends, and exposed to the barbed shafts of malice, envy, detraction, and revenge—in want of every necessary of life, and destitute of any means to procure them—they had no alternative left, but either to accept the fortuitous assistance I could procure

cure them from Lord Charleville (one of the most benevolent men in England) and others of my friends, or at once to have sunk, the unresisting victims of oppression.

“ Through the influence of this nobleman, whose interest I could at that time command, Charles was appointed midshipman on board the ———, then laying at ———, with a promise that as his name had once before been upon the books, he should, as soon as possible, have a commission—and which, a few months since he received.

“ Soon after the birth of little Emma, they were again, by Mrs. Devereux being taken very ill, reduced to the utmost distress—his Lordship again assisted them, and they retired further into the country, where Augusta exerted herself in a most astonishing manner, not only nursing the child herself, but executing various pieces of needle work, in a style very superior to the generality of similar productions ;

productions; these I contrived to dispose of in town to very good advantage. She also finished a variety of most exquisite drawings, which in happier days she had amused herself by sketching; these I likewise, from time to time, disposed of for considerable sums; and thus, for nearly two years, by her own indefatigable industry and talents, she supported her mother, herself, and her child—performed every domestic duty, and spared time occasionally to look in upon the aged and the sick in the village. For, severe as had been her disappointments in life, and the misfortunes she had thus early experienced, they were insufficient to eradicate the pure flame of benevolence with which her bosom ever glowed, to alleviate the calamities of life. She would go from cottage to cottage—the afflictions of one she would sooth with the most compassionate tenderness—the indigence of another she would relieve, as far as her circumscribed abilities would permit. To the sick she administered nourishing restoratives; and with

the assistance of Buchan, was enabled to supply those with necessary medicines, whose illness exceeded the power of aliment to cure. The ignorant she instructed: and by the force of example, the recommendation of precept, and the most engaging affability of look and manner, reclaimed some from the destructive paths of vice. And such is the veneration the villagers of ——— still entertain for the lovely Mrs. Thompson (the name by which she was there known), her child, and her mother, that even the poorest day-labourer in the place, would gladly contribute his utmost endeavours towards the support of all three, could they by that means prevail upon them to return and reside among them; and those who should be desirous of learning a true character of this much-injured family, need only inquire throughout the whole village of ———, to feel equal admiration and esteem for that virtuous girl, who having erred in one particular, nobly dared to encounter every evil of life, rather than submit to

to the trammels of vice—dared to return to the practice of virtue, though amidst the severest sufferings—and by a life of the strictest rectitude, endeavour to atone for the errors of the past, and become entitled (as far as human means can entitle) to the merciful forgiveness of that being, who, less rigid than man to man, has promised that “if the wicked will forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts,” all shall be forgotten.

“But the wisdom of providence saw that afflictions were still necessary to the eternal welfare of these his servants, and permitted Sir William Clementson, who in all his pursuits only sought his own libidinous gratifications, to be the instrument by which they were either to arrive at a greater degree of purity, or by which they were to be punished in this world, rather than in the next. Whatever good is ultimately to result from these trials of afflictions, is as yet unknown: but,

I trust, even in this life, to see them rewarded with happiness.

“ But to proceed—Sir William, by one of those unaccountable occurrences generally denominated accidents, passed through ———, without the smallest idea of meeting with Augusta, who was just returning from a visit to a sick couple, and before she either saw, or could avoid him—sprung from his chaise and caught her in his arms. The sudden surprise occasioned her to faint, but she soon recovered. She desired him to release her hand, and suffer her to pass without molestation, or otherwise she would alarm the village. He only laughed at her threat, and kept drawing her towards the chaise. At last, finding her strength, her entreaties, and her threats, equally unavailable, she exerted her voice, and soon brought a sufficient number about her, all zealous in her cause, to have rescued her from a much more powerful opposition than Sir William was capable of presenting. He therefore

therefore prudently loosed his hold, jumped into his chaise, and drove off with the utmost speed.

“ Augusta returned to her mother, related this unfortunate rencountre, and expressed her apprehensions that Sir William would endeavour to discover their retreat, perhaps expose them, or by his persecution put an end to the returning tranquillity which had just again began to enliven their hours. These apprehensions, alas! were but too soon realized. For the very next evening, as they were sitting alone, conversing upon the subject, the door suddenly opened, and, without any ceremony, in walked Sir William. He attempted at first to exculpate himself—said he had a proposition to make, which he hoped would be acceded to—expressed much sorrow for the past—vowed the most fervent attachment—and after a good deal of circumlocution, with the most unmanly cruelty insulted them, by offering to settle immediately upon

little Emma 5000*l.*—an annuity of 100*l.* per annum for the life of Mrs. Devereux—to provide handsomely for Charles, and to make over to Augusta, landed property to the amount of 1000*l.* per annum—upon one condition—namely, that she should become his mistress. This infamous proposal was treated with the contempt it merited, and their rejection expressed with the just indignation of virtuous minds, incapable of submitting, though but for a moment, and that to purchase a prolonged existence of earthly felicity—to a deliberate act of guilt.

“ He continued to insult their feelings, and their ears, by solicitations and propositions, which, though expressed in language not indelicate, all tended to the one point. Nor could they at last get rid of him, but by entreating the assistance of some farmers, whose lands adjoined their house—dreadful alternative! for the wretch finding he could not withstand this force, meanly endeavoured, by a
most

most contemptible falsehood, to escape the chastisement he was extremely apprehensive he should experience ; he therefore attempted to divert their attention from himself, by declaring that Augusta had formerly resided with him as his mistress, and would never have thought of leaving him, had it not been for the arts of her mother, who thought by this contrivance to have drawn him into a marriage ; and as a further confirmation of the authenticity of his account, assured them upon his honour, that the child they then saw was his own daughter ; the truth of which he defied either of them to contradict.

“ But it is needless (continued Dr. Elder-ton) to recount the variety of despicable arts to which the villain had recourse in order to effect his purposes. Nor will I much longer trespass upon your patience, with particulars only calculated to exhibit on the one part a character superlatively depraved, and on the other, sufferings sufficient to immortalize even
a Socrates.

a Socrates. Suffice it to say, the health of Augusta rapidly declined—for to be thus exposed and villified by a man she had once so tenderly regarded—a man too, the father of her little darling, was a reflection which brought with it ten thousand agonizing retrospections, that sunk her to the very grave. Poor girl! she was now no longer able properly to attend to her child—nor to execute her former tasks; could no longer carry health and comfort to the cottages of the poor, nor instruction to the habitations of the ignorant. She even avoided, as much as possible, the society of her mother; and would sit for hours in her own solitary apartment, with the little Emma upon her knee, without uttering a word, until the child, terrified by the melancholy silence, which would some times last more than an hour, and then interrupted only by the deep drawn sighs of her mother, would endeavour to remain with Mrs. Deve-reux, and by every infantine means escape from Augusta.

“ Mrs.

“ Mrs. Devereux, in answer to a letter of mine, in which I had earnestly pressed to know the cause of their silence, and the reason I had not received any of the works Augusta was in the habit of sending me for sale; informed me of the foregoing particulars, and that they were suffering every affliction, mental and personal, the human frame could possibly support. I immediately sat off for their melancholy residence, and brought them with me to London; where Augusta, being again desirous of supporting herself and family, exerted her utmost powers, and recovered from that gloomy abstraction which I at first thought would have terminated in mental derangement. But about four months since, being called into the North upon very urgent business, I left town, supposing I should not be absent more than three or four weeks, and earnestly entreated Mrs. Devereux, that should any thing detain me beyond that period, to draw upon me, without reserve, for whatever they had occasion. Unfortunately,
a few

a few days after my arrival at Edinburgh, wishing to see an old friend at Glasgow, I mounted my horse with an intention of riding there, but when at the distance of about eight miles my horse suddenly took fright, and at last threw me. In the fall I broke a blood vessel, and fractured my scull in so dangerous a manner, that for more than ten weeks I laid at an inn, totally insensible. When sufficiently recovered to peruse my letters, I found two from Mrs. Devereux, which I immediately got my friend to answer, but it either found its way into the hands of Sir William, or was detained by their landlord. I continued slowly to recover, and arrived in London the evening when you, Sir, (turning to Williams) so providentially afforded them your assistance.

“ One circumstance I have omitted. In October last, Charles received his commission as lieutenant, and with it leave of absence. During his stay in London, happening to pass by

by the St. James's Coffee-house, he saw Sir William at one of the windows, and before he could escape him flew into the room, vowing that no subterfuge should now screen him from his vengeance—a scuffle ensued, and several interposed as Sir William declared his readiness to meet him the following morning, when he would give him every *satisfaction* in his power, or that a *gentleman* could desire. That is, in the *honourable* vocabulary of duelling, had he possessed sufficient courage for the occasion, he would have endeavoured to have *killed* the brother, as an *atonement* for the violation of the sister's honour. All present knew Sir William, though they had no recollection of the person, the name, or the wrongs which agitated the bosom of Charles; they therefore so warmly seconded the *reasonableness* of the delay, that Charles was obliged reluctantly to accede.

“ The next morning Charles, punctual to his engagement, repaired to the appointed spot;

spot ; but it is impossible to describe the rage and vexation he felt, when he met—not Sir William—but a Bow street officer, who produced his warrant—took him into custody—went before a magistrate, and Charles was bound over to keep the peace.

“ Soon after this, Mrs. Devereux not hearing from me, nor Augusta being able to dispose of the several pieces she had finished, they were again reduced to very great distress. Charles wrote to Lord Charleville an account of their situation, but received no answer. He then, just before Christmas, wrote another letter, the copy of which he put into my hands a few days ago, which is another proof among the many I have met with in life, how, even the very best of us are biased by *prejudice*. For his Lordship is a man of the most unbounded philanthropy, anxious to be, and to be esteemed, a Christian ; and I am persuaded could not have withstood the solicitations and representations it contained, had not his mind
been

been unaccountably prejudiced by some malicious misrepresentation, which has not yet been properly explained : for after describing the extreme wretchedness his family were a prey to, he continued to urge the most forcible reasons for his apparent importunity, and concluded with entreating him—by every present and future hope, by every consideration a christian holds obligatory, and more particularly by the sacred ritual he was about to participate, that he would succour his family, who were, and would be when that day arrived, destitute of every comfort to console the mind, or necessary to support the body : and yet, though thus pathetically entreated by an appeal to the dying love of a Saviour, prejudice was sufficiently strong to prevail with him totally to neglect them. I have been more particular in mentioning this circumstance, gentlemen, (said Dr. Elderton) from two causes ; first, to shew how greatly the force of prejudice can mislead us ; and, secondly, to shew that there is no situation,

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though apparently desperate, in which we ought to despair of the merciful protection of a superintending providence : no ! though to our apprehensions, the support should be delayed until within the last moment of mortal existence. For the very day before this festival, the unfortunate family I am speaking of, arose with the most cheerless prospects, and yet before it terminated, they received from a quarter they least expected, assistance which enabled them to celebrate the following day with heartfelt gratitude and joy.

“ The subsequent events which plunged them into the distress you so humanely contributed to alleviate, and the calamities under which they are still labouring, you are already sufficiently acquainted with ; I shall not, therefore, any longer detain your attention, gentlemen, further than to express the hope, that the several particulars which truth and honour induced Mrs. Devereux to desire me to relate without disguise, have not lessened them in
your

your good opinion, or destroyed the interest you before felt for their misfortunes."

All three (for the counsellor was of the party) assured Dr. Elderton, that on the contrary, the candid explanations he had entered into, and the confidence Mrs. Devereux had reposed in their honour, by imparting these particulars, had considerably increased the interest they before felt, and would induce them to exert their utmost endeavours to extricate the family from the machinations of a villain, and the unmerited sufferings they were so poignantly enduring.

Various had been the observations and reflections each, in the course of the foregoing, had made upon the conduct of the execrable Sir William, as they severally felt themselves affected. Erasmus expressed his abhorrence of such villanous duplicity, with all the warmth and feeling of a generous virtuous mind, grieved to be convinced of the extent

to which human depravity, and human misery can arrive. The counsellor, with the liberal sentiments of a benevolent disposition, compassionated the severe afflictions this wretched family had experienced from the consummate arts of an accomplished villain, and the fatal effects which followed as the consequence though of but *one* deviation from the strict paths of rectitude; whilst his son was by turns furious and silent—one moment giving utterance to all that contempt, hatred, and indignation could express; and the next, silently meditating upon the means of avenging the wrongs the much injured Augusta had sustained; then agonized by the sufferings and distress which, in consequence, she had so repeatedly experienced—and again, glowing with admiration as he found her mind superior to the blandishments of vice, though aided by the enchanting delusions of love. And when Dr. Elderton described her industrious exertions—her anxious endeavours to alleviate the wants and miseries of those whom misfortune,

fortune, sickness, or indigence, entitled to her notice—and the tender susceptibility of her disposition; the animation of his countenance expressed his very soul: and neither his father nor Erasmus could possibly mistake the nature of the sentiment so intelligibly portrayed in every feature, and so visible in every action. The counsellor sighed, apprehensive of the wretchedness such a sentiment, if indulged, must occasion his son: and yet by what means to divert his attention to other objects, so as to wear out the present impression, he knew not; for the two principal traits in Mordaunt's disposition were, an enthusiastic love of fame, and an ardent desire to ameliorate, as much as in his power, the condition of the unfortunate. He had known and appreciated the virtues of the venerated Howard, a name almost synonymous with benevolence; and wished, though at an humble distance, to emulate the conduct of a man so justly esteemed by all the world. This principle, exclusive of the regard he evidently

y 3 entertained

entertained for Augusta, would, the counselor well knew, occasion him to persevere in his attentions to the family, until he had extricated them from every difficulty. To effect this, he must pass a considerable portion of his time in their company—must become more intimately acquainted with the amiable disposition of Augusta—more interested in her happiness—and consequently more attached to her person. His affections would thus become irrevocably fixed upon an object he could not introduce into the world as his wife, without subjecting himself to the sneer of the illiberal and the prejudiced. He must then, either resign some part of that beloved fame he was so eager to acquire, or be miserable from an attachment at once ardent and hopeless. Mordaunt could feel, admire, and appreciate what was right; but if the world did not esteem it such, he had not sufficient resolution in himself to brave its frown, or to question the propriety of its decision; in fact, his father, whose chief happiness centered

ed in his son, well knew how vulnerable Mordaunt was in this particular, and how little able to encounter "the world's dread laugh, which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn," even were the whole of his family inclined to renounce the pleasing expectations they had recently formed of his marrying an heiress of noble birth, and which they were extremely ambitious of seeing accomplished. These reflections spread a gloom over the countenance of the counsellor, which, though he endeavoured, he could not entirely conceal, and all present were apprehensive he was unwell; he attributed it to the melancholy account of the sufferings of the unfortunate family, for whose happiness he said he felt extremely interested, and would exert his utmost abilities to obtain the immediate liberation of Mrs. Devereux. This he shortly afterwards effected; for when Sir William's bill of particulars came to be produced, and properly investigated, it consisted of an account of monies paid to persons to whom the colonel, it is true, stood indebted

debted at the time of his decease; but as he died both insolvent and intestate, and Sir William had taken upon himself to discharge these debts, without either the direction or knowledge of Mrs. Devereux, the judge thought proper to discharge her out of custody upon her filing common bail; and very shortly after this, Augusta began slowly to recover. The lieutenant had also been at liberty for now more than a month, having been admitted to bail upon Sir William being pronounced out of danger.

After settling the affairs of this unfortunate family, and placing them in an elegant comfortable situation, the counsellor procured the lieutenant an appointment which promised him a rapid promotion.

The evening before he was to join his ship, Mordaunt and Erasmus supped with him at his mother's—the females had retired, and they were just about to do the same, when the lieutenant's spirits appeared suddenly depressed—he sighed—and at last observed,

served, "to that Providence who has so repeatedly succoured my family under afflictions, and extricated them when every prospect appeared to threaten inevitable destruction, I am about to commit my mother and his sister; and trust, that the same power will still preserve them from the further machinations of Sir William."

Williams took his hand; and after assuring him he might depend upon his friendship in all vicissitudes, added, "with regard to the apprehensions you still seem to entertain, on account of your mother and sister, banish them entirely from your mind; for I here pledge myself to watch over the safety of these dear objects of your affections, with as unwearied a solicitude as you could possibly do were you present. I can likewise promise the same affectionate attention from my mother and sister as you have already witnessed. I think I can also answer for Mrs. Inglebert; and I am confident my friend
here

here will give you the like assurance : and let me further add—when I betray this trust, this confidence, by any sinister design, or any wish inimical to the happiness of you all, may my name become the detestation of all good men, and my reputation the sport of every bad one.”

Erasmus then entreated the lieutenant to believe, that no opportunity should be omitted on his part, to render his family every assistance that could either shield them from misfortune, or possibly increase their happiness.

The lieutenant, when he could recover sufficient composure to express by words the gratitude of his heart, warmly thanked them for the friendship they had professed, and the kindness they promised to shew his family ; and previous to their parting, they severally entreated heaven, that nothing but death might ever dissolve their friendship.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

“Forbear, fond man! that heaven thou dar’st accuse
Just tho’ mysterious, leads us on unerring
Thro’ ways unmark’d, from guilt to punishment.”

THE reader will recollect, that in Chap. XV. Mrs. Inglebert had left town to attend her friend Lady Griffiths, who was at that time seriously indisposed; and that Adelaide was, by the contrivance of her unnatural father, Lord Orlington, not only separated from her early friends, but threatened with an eternal seclusion from the world, unless she solemnly promised to renounce the object of her affections. This she had refused; and in consequence his Lordship determined to convey her to one of his estates, situated in the North

North of Ireland, where he intended to commit her to the charge of a man who had formerly lived with him as a domestic, and who was every way qualified to discharge with fidelity the honourable office of a jailor; for he was of a stern, rugged disposition, not easily softened into mercy, unless the appeal should be aided by the more powerful argument of gold. But this his Lordship superabundantly possessed; and where his passions were interested, never spared any expence to gratify them; whilst all that Adelaide had about her, did not exceed 20l.

Erasmus we likewise left in the same chapter, ignorant of the fate of this beloved persecuted girl, and tortured by ten thousand fears for her safety; for the contemptible opinion he now entertained of his uncle's principles, led him to apprehend he would not scruple to have recourse to any measures, however harsh or unjustifiable, that would enable him to keep them apart, and to gratify
the

the malignant resentment he had expressed upon the knowledge of the reciprocity of their regard. As soon as Erasmus returned to his apartment he took up the pen, and entered into as circumstantial a relation of the foregoing particulars as either his memory or his feelings would permit, and concluded with requesting his mother, the moment she could possibly leave her friend, to join him in town; but in the mean time to give him every information in her power, relative to the particulars of Adelaide's birth, and her advice what steps he could pursue in order to recover this beloved object of his affections.

Lady Griffiths was now in a state of convalescence. Mrs. Inglebert, therefore, upon receipt of this letter, instantly returned to her son, though she had little consolation to afford him, being in want of it herself—she could only join her own regrets to those of his, and lament the loss they had thus unexpectedly sustained by this cruel separation

from their beloved girl, who she now found was far dearer to her than a few weeks before she had imagined.

She wrote to his Lordship a letter, which had he not been as destitute of every feeling of humanity, as he was of every principle of honour, he could not have withstood the pathetic representation she made of the deep distress which his conduct, and concealment of her Adelaide, had occasioned her : but the only use he made of this letter, (which after a considerable delay, from the servants not knowing where to send it, at last reached him) was to shew to Adelaide such parts of it, as confirmed, beyond a doubt, his own statement, that he was indeed her father, by blood, though not by affection.

Erasmus devoted every hour, for nearly a fortnight, in endeavours to trace his Lordship, but in vain ; though he ascertained, by this means, that they had not as yet quitted the kingdom.

dom. But the fatigue and anxiety, both of mind and body, which he had thus long endured, brought on a dangerous fever, which confined him to his room for more than three weeks. His mother attended him during the whole time, with the most anxious solicitude, though her own health suffered severely from this additional shock; and she was nearly inconsolable, both on account of her Adelaide, and now for her darling son, whose life at one time the physicians almost despaired of saving.

Now it was that Mrs. Inglebert felt and lamented the folly of her former conduct, and accused herself with being the author of her own unhappiness, and her son's illness; for had she not, in the first instance, suffered her mind to be captivated by her brother's proposition of introducing him into the world as his nephew and future son-in-law; or had she then acquainted him with the true motive which influenced his uncle

to notice him, all the misery she now felt and contemplated, might have been avoided, as Erasmus would then have known and acted from the dictates of his own judgment, and a knowledge of his uncle's views. —At that period she was in the possession of as much happiness as can well be enjoyed in this life. Her mind had recovered its serenity. Her son was all she could wish—noble, generous, brave, sincere, and accomplished—with every virtue of the heart—and every attainment that the most liberal education could bestow—he was virtuous, contented, and happy. Her Adelaide too, was as accomplished in mind, as she was beautiful in person; and as faultless a character as human nature can possibly produce. And her friends, particularly Sir John and Lady Griffiths, were as kind, sincere, and attentive, as her most sanguine wishes could have desired—and yet, though surrounded with all these blessings and advantages, the moment the prospect was presented to her view of
advancing

advancing her son to honours and distinctions so ardently coveted, and so eagerly pursued by the generality of mankind—she hazarded the destruction of this happiness and her son's future peace, to see him shine a meteor, gazed at and admired for a season, though seldom of long duration.

The morning after Lord Orlington's dispute with Erasmus, Williams went to the prison alone, and in the course of conversation, acquainted the Lieutenant with some of the particulars that had occasioned his friend's absence—and in so doing, the name of Lord Orlington was frequently mentioned. Williams thought the Lieutenant appeared to be uncommonly agitated by these particulars, which greatly excited his curiosity, and he inquired if he had any knowledge of his Lordship. The lieutenant said—no! he had not;—but about two years before, his captain wishing to dispel, for a moment, the gloom which at that time preyed upon his health,

health, politely insisted upon his accompanying him to the house of a friend, where he had the happiness to spend a whole evening in company with a young lady, whose polite attentions, and lively, yet soothing manner, insensibly relieved the melancholy of his mind. Wishing to know something more of so charming a girl, he had just requested permission to call upon her the following morning; when, from a person who that instant accosted her, he discovered she was the daughter of the rich Lord Orlington, and consequently a very unfit acquaintance for the poor Devereux.—This induced him, he said, to remain on board the following day, and he had never since heard or seen any thing of her. Williams easily discovered from the tone of his voice, and the whole of his manner, that the playful Henrietta had made a serious impression upon the heart of his friend, which neither misfortunes, nor an absence of nearly two years, had been sufficient totally to obliterate. This, as soon as

Erasmus

Erasmus was able to converse, Williams acquainted him with, and both sincerely wished that, as they were certainly attached to each other, Henrietta had been at liberty to reward the constancy and worth of her admirer, by bestowing upon him her hand and fortune; the last of which, independent of the Earl her father, was sufficient to ensure the elegancies, though not to command the luxuries of life.

Erasmus slowly recovered his health, and again employed persons in different parts of the kingdom, to make the most minute inquiries of the several post-boys, and at all the respective inns upon the road—describing his uncle, Henrietta, and the dear, lamented object of his affections—but their exertions were not as yet successful. Williams distinguished himself upon this occasion; and during the illness of Erasmus, by the most active, though ineffectual endeavours to discover the fugitives, and by the
most

most sedulous attentions to relieve the inquietude which preyed upon the mind, and principally occasioned the indisposition of his friend.

It was soon after the recovery of Erasmus, that Dr. Elderton entered into the before mentioned particulars, relative to the unfortunate Augusta and her family; and that the mutual friends of both Williams and Erasmus, in conjunction with Dr. Elderton, compleatly exonerated them from every pecuniary obligation to Sir William, who had never conferred a favour, but with a view of answering the vilest of purposes.

The Lieutenant before he could obtain his discharge, was obliged not only to find bail, but also himself to enter again into a recognizance to preserve the peace. Sir William was therefore relieved from the disagreeable alternative of either quitting the kingdom or fighting; both of which, at that moment, would

would have proved equally inconvenient, as he had a match of some consequence depending at Newmarket. Though he little thought how much he was indebted for the calm he was thus permitted to enjoy, to the moral and religious arguments of Erasmus, who at last persuaded Williams to lay aside his intentions of challenging Sir William;—first, by reminding him how great a coward both the Lieutenant and Dr. Elderton had represented this contemptible mortal;—and as such, greatly beneath his resentment:—And, secondly, from the religious consideration that, the man who presumes to avenge either his own, or another's wrongs, by an appeal to the sword, and in consequence kills his adversary, is, in the sight of Heaven, as compleatly guilty of murder, as he the law adjudges such, who on the highway deprives a fellow-creature of life for refusing to deliver up his property. “For,” said Erasmus, “has not the Almighty declared that ‘*vengeance is mine, and I will repay.*’—“ Or supposing

posing your antagonist possesses that desperate courage, denominated among duellists—*honour*—which induces him to justify the atrocity of his actions by accepting your challenge—you meet—the chance is at least equal that he proves the victor; and then, should you be carried home to your family a corpse—think of the distraction of your relatives—of the grief of your friends—of the exultation of your sanguinary enemy—of the extreme wretchedness of those in whose cause you have hazarded your existence here, if not hereafter. For what?—Why, for that which you have not attained! Was it to punish? The violator of innocence triumphs in victory! Was it to prove the falsehood of an assertion? If the mode resorted to was a criterion, your defeat confirms the statement of your opponent!—And let me add—reflect not only upon these considerations, but also on the eternal ruin you may thus have assisted to plunge the miscreant in, whose vices have been the occasion of it all,
by

by suffering him to suppose he may sin on with impunity, if he possesses sufficient courage to meet the consequences, or superior skill to ensure the victory. This subject my revered parent not only frequently discussed with me when a boy, but renewed among the principal directions he left me at his death. Again and again has he enforced the injunction—"Never, upon any occasion, either in compliance with the absurd prejudices of the world, or the suggestion of anger, deliberately accept, or give a challenge. If your cause is a good one, trust it to Him—'who judgeth right.'—If a bad one, do not aggravate your guilt by adding to it either the murder of your adversary, or the dreadful consequences of appearing before the Eternal Judge of all, with your own crimes unrepented of, and unatoned."

These arguments induced Williams to give up his meditated vengeance, and to leave Sir William to the punishment of a superior power.

power. Nor was this punishment long delayed; for the following Spring Meeting, at Newmarket, Sir William and Lord Coulthurst, having a match depending between two favorite horses for a very considerable sum: a dispute arose between them, on account of some jockeyship, which Sir William hinted he thought his Lordship had been guilty of; the Peer enraged at the suggestion, notwithstanding he was now considerably advanced in years, struck Sir William a most violent blow in the face with the butt end of his whip. This was at Weatherby's, in the presence of a large party of nobility and others. Sir William, heated with wine and passion, and urged by the vehement recommendation of all his friends present, (who had likewise lost very large sums upon the same horse, and all suspected his Lordship had influenced the jockey to lose) challenged his Lordship.—Pistols were immediately produced—both fired at the same time, and both fell mortally wounded. His Lordship survived

survived only until the next day; and Sir William not quite the week out.

Thus ended the existence of two men, whose lives had been equally vicious, equally infamous, and equally destructive to the happiness of all who had the misfortune to be distinguished as the objects of their pretended regard. Nor did either leave behind them a single individual, who, from a sense of benefits conferred, or a real affection to their memories, felt a sorrow that they were no more. Nor did the Earl of Blissington any great while survive his quondam friend; for, as if heaven designed to exhibit to the view of erring mortals an awful lesson of divine displeasure against sin, and a just retribution for the wickedness of those—"whose thoughts are not as his thoughts"—and to reward the patient endurance of these who trusted to the protection of his providence: not quite two years elapsed before his Lordship's am-

bitious projects were all terminated by that arch-leveller—death.

But to return.—His Lordship had travelled through Scotland, and passed from Portpatrick to Carickfergus; but scarcely had he landed in Ireland, when he was seized with a sudden fit of the gout in his stomach and head, and that to so violent a degree as to leave him for several hours totally insensible. Not expecting such an attack, he had taken no precaution to secure Adelaide, who had she possessed sufficient resolution to have instantly decided upon leaving this unnatural parent, the trifle she had about her, would have enabled her to have escaped to some place of security, from whence she might have written to her friends for further assistance—or she might have immediately repassed into Scotland; and in less than a week have again been in the arms of those who so sincerely lamented her absence. But whilst debating with herself, whether she should
abandon

abandon this cruel parent to the care of strangers, who were ignorant of his rank and situation in life, (and he had extorted a solemn promise from her before they sat out, that she should not discover either, or attempt to effect her escape from him by this means) or whether the duty of a child was not of that obligatory nature, as to remain incumbent, even though no reciprocal benefits flowed from the connection. The treatment she had experienced, and the still worse with which she was threatened, certainly gave her a right to fly from persecution; but then, was he not her parent, and as such entitled to her attentions, particularly as he was now afflicted with a dangerous malady: and could she leave him at such a period as this?—Whilst revolving these considerations in her mind, his Lordship recovered his recollection, and instantly called for Adelaide. With the utmost tenderness and most dutiful submission, she attended upon him; and proper medical assistance being procured, he soon regained

sufficient strength to travel still further North. Here it was some solace to the mind of the wretched girl that she met again her sister Henrietta; and though his Lordship prevented their being ever alone together, and contemptuously forbade Adelaide to call Lady Henrietta *sister*. Yet there were moments, when by looks, they interchanged vows of affection—sometimes they had the happiness of pressing each others hand—and once of snatching an embrace during a moment's absence of his Lordship. Nearly two years past, and no tidings reached England of these beloved, ever lamented objects.

During this period many events took place in the respective families of Williams, and Mrs. Devereux, which at one moment promised the brightest prospects, and the next threatened additional calamities—for though the whole of Williams' family could not avoid loving and admiring the amiable simplicity, and strict rectitude of Augusta's mind,
and

and all so greatly doated upon Mordaunt, that they would willingly have made almost any other sacrifice to his happiness; yet the idea of his marrying a woman, whose child must continually remind the world of a once deviation, notwithstanding the strict propriety of her present conduct, and the exemplary virtues she was daily practising—so powerfully influenced their feelings, that their expressive looks, though they were silence, convinced Mordaunt, that, even were he to disregard the opinion of the world upon the present occasion, yet by such a marriage, he would render his family extremely unhappy.

“I must no longer”—said Williams one day to his friend Erasmus—“I must no longer indulge myself in this dangerous intercourse; it has already but too fatally, I fear, destroyed my peace.—I must no longer enjoy the society and pleasing conversation of this amiable girl, whose manners fascinate my senses—whose knowledge captivates my

attention, and whose virtues irresistibly command alike my admiration and my esteem.— I find her influence over my affections so despotic, that out of her society I do not feel as though I valued existence. When absent from her, I pass my hours in thinking over the incidents which occurred at our last interview. In reflecting upon the uncommon solidity of her understanding—the force of her reasoning—the variety of her conversation—the softness of her manners, and the equanimity of her temper—her attentions to her parent; but, above all, her tender affectionate solicitude for her little Emma. I have contemplated this picture of maternal tenderness—though perhaps only expressed by a look, a peculiar tone of voice, or a gesture—with such rapture, such indescribable emotions of oppressive delight, that my eyes have filled with tears, and I have been obliged to remove from my seat to hide the sensations I must otherwise have discovered.—I have thought how exquisite
must

must be the happiness of the man who could boast of possessing such a treasure: such a mother for his children.—I have been a thousand times upon the point of declaring these sentiments to the lovely object who excited them; but, then—the thought would instantly obtrude—Will the world view her in all these captivating situations? Will they give implicit credit to the integrity of her conduct?—Or will they not glance from the child to its father? Torturing reflection! which continually annihilates my happiness. No! my friend, I could not endure the thought, that the wife of my bosom—the mistress of my affections, should be looked upon with the eye of indifference, scorn, or suspicion. No! I must tear myself away. I must conquer this passion; though whether I succeed or fail, I must be equally wretched. I must lose a treasure—oh! how inestimable!—or carry about me a flame which consumes my peace.”

“ I have

“ I have heard you with much attention,” replied Erasmus, “ and let me tell you this is not the first time the subject has engaged my serious consideration—though were it not for the prejudices I hourly witness in real life—and the knowledge I have of your slavish (pardon the expression, my friend) submission to these prejudices, I should not of myself have supposed the question could possibly remain a moment undecided in the mind of a man, who considers himself a rational being in the pursuit of happiness, capable of combining causes, and considering virtue superior to vice, pleasure to pain, happiness to misery:—but then you will say, it is with a view of avoiding this misery, which would be produced by the disapprobation or ridicule of the world, that you are about to fly from what, if it were not for this apprehended ridicule and disapprobation, would constitute your felicity. What! does my friend possess so little reason or religion, that it should be a question with him, whether
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his conduct should be guided by the dictates of his reason, and the injunctions of his God, or by the erroneous, and in some instances, fastidious prejudices of the world? Reason suggests, that when two propositions present themselves to our consideration, the preference should be given to that which is the least objectionable. You are about to make choice of a companion for life, who is to be the chief source of your future felicity. To constitute this felicity, it is absolutely requisite, according to your estimate of happiness, that she should possess virtue, gentle manners, an accomplished mind, a benevolent heart, and a cheerful placid disposition—these advantages centre in the object of your affections: but she has erred in one particular instance, and in that instance which a great moral writer denominates the *essential principle* which a woman is taught from infancy to hold sacred: from which, if she once swerves, there is no hope—no security for future dependence. But with all

my

my deference to the authority of that moralist, I consider there are exceptions to be made in favour of particular instances ; for I am persuaded the mind that has erred, and yet possesses sufficient fortitude, resolution, and virtue, to return to the paths of strict rectitude, may, with equal confidence, be relied upon, as the one who can boast a more immaculate observance of that one grand injunction of life, without considering an amiable temper, and a benevolent heart, to be as absolutely requisite, as chastity of person. Look through the world dispassionately, but with minute attention, and then answer me, whether there are not sources which may grieve the heart of a man of sensibility and of nice feelings, equal to that of knowing there was a moment, in which the wife of his affections deceived by a specious villain, mistook the *semblance* of honour, virtue, and generosity, for the reality—most poignantly suffered from the deception, and most bitterly repented the deviation. These sufferings, and this repentance,

ance, have, I am persuaded, restored her to the favour of her God—and shall man require more than his Maker? Shall man, who entreats forgiveness only as *he* forgives, and who is assured he must not expect mercy, unless *he* is merciful—shall he exact a more rigid, uniform, undeviating integrity from a fellow-mortal, than he performs to his God? And if he expects not this perfection, he must acknowledge, that if the woman of his affections is in all other respects as unexceptionable in conduct as Augusta Devereux, that she is entitled to all he can possibly make her,—the wife of his soul. He may say :—
“ In society, in any other character than as a wife, I will esteem and consider her as equally entitled to my regard and good offices, as though she was perfectly innocent.” Fal-lacious reasoning! When *we* solicit heaven for pardon and restoration to favour, do *we* expect *no more*? Do we only hope for an intermediate state between the displeasure of the Almighty, and the enjoyment of his presence?

sence? Most surely, we hope still better things than this limited forgiveness! *We* hope to be reinstated entirely in that situation to which *undeviating integrity* would, in the first instance, have entitled us. And if so? Let no one consider he has fulfilled that part of the condition by which he expects to obtain forgiveness of heaven for his own transgressions; unless he entirely forgives, upon a sincere repentance and amendment, the deviations of others; and restore them to exactly the same situation, in his opinion and regard, as they were entitled to before their deviation."

This reasoning convinced the judgment, and accorded so well with the present feelings of Williams, that he determined instantly to act upon it, and in consequence left his friend, and went immediately to Augusta. She was alone. After conversing for some time upon the general topics of the day—he insensibly diverted the conversation to the subject
nearest

nearest his heart; and at last declared his happiness entirely depended upon her regard, and unless she permitted him to indulge the hope that his assiduities and attachment would ultimately render him worthy of her affections, his future life must be miserable. She appeared greatly agitated, but at last recovered sufficient composure to assure him, she felt more grateful for his good opinion, than she could find words to express her acknowledgments. His repeated favours and attentions entitled him, she said, to all the gratitude she could feel, and infinitely more than she could ever express. She would therefore at once be explicit. That she felt sufficient gratitude—nay, she would not disguise her sentiments—that she felt sufficient *regard* to induce her to endeavour all in her power to promote his happiness, who had so greatly contributed to promote her's, she entreated him to believe. But if she could consent that he should sink himself and family in the estimation of the world by such an alliance, under

the peculiar circumstances of her situation, she should hold herself not only culpable, but one of the most contemptible of human beings—No! worlds should not tempt her to such base ingratitude!—Williams was about to have urged a variety of arguments—but, in evident disorder, she entreated him to leave her—she was *resolved*, she said, and therefore all conversation upon the subject superfluous; though her quivering lip and palid countenance, sufficiently expressed the state of her mind; he again attempted to expostulate.—She repeatedly waved her hand for him to depart—and which at last he was obliged to comply with.

When he quitted her, he proceeded in great agitation of mind along the road, and without designing it, found himself at the door of the mess room, where the greater number of his brother officers were assembled. He entered, and found the room in confusion, and some endeavouring to separate two disputants

tants, who both exclaimed at once—"I am glad you are come, Major."

Williams endeavoured to recover his spirits, and to appear composed. He inquired what was the matter, and was instantly answered by the youngest—"Why, Major, Captain Forbes just now asserted, that it is generally reported you are about to marry the mistress of the late Sir William Clementson, by whom she has a child still living; I contradicted the aspersion, and vowed that the whole was a vile falsehood. Forbes resented, something which he thought I intended personally; and we had proceeded rather too far for an amicable adjustment when you entered. Is not the report totally without foundation, Major?"

To attempt a description of either the feelings or countenance of Williams, would require a superior pen to that of the present author's—nay even the pencil of a Reynolds could

but imperfectly delineate the variety of contending passions that were in an instant depicted on his countenance. The moral arguments of his friend Erasmus against duelling, were all forgotten; and at last, in a voice which rage and indignation scarcely rendered articulate, he inquired of Forbes—by what right he *dared* to make the subject of his private conduct, a matter of public conversation; and demanded immediate satisfaction.

Colonel French, who had at first interposed to prevent the dispute between Captain Forbes and Lieutenant Smith from becoming serious, now easily perceived from the agitation of Williams, and the expression of his countenance, that the report was not so entirely destitute of truth, as the lieutenant, in his zeal for his friend's reputation, had insisted it were; and was extremely sorry the subject should at all have been mentioned. He, therefore, with the assistance of several
other

other officers, endeavoured to reconcile the parties, which was at last effected; and Williams returned to his apartments, in a state of mind more easily to be conceived than described. Here he found his friend Erasmus, to whom he related the events that had taken place since the morning; and concluded by declaring his firm resolution, to procure an exchange into some regiment going abroad, and to quit England, in the hope that absence might weaken his attachment.

This, notwithstanding the reasoning of his friend, and the regrets of his family, he shortly after put into execution—went with a detachment to the army in Flanders—was immediately engaged with the enemy, and dangerously wounded. As soon as he recovered sufficient strength for travelling, he was recommended to return to England; but the ship in which he had taken his passage, encountered a very severe storm, and was drove upon the north-west coast of Ireland.

As his chaise passed through Omagh, he noticed a female at a window fronting the road, who, upon his nearer approach, he discovered to be Henrietta. He stopped his chaise, got out, and was soon recollected by her. In a few seconds he had the happiness to learn, that the long lost, lamented Adelaide, was in the house, which belonged to the Earl of Blissington, who was then confined to his room dangerously ill with another attack of his old inveterate enemy, the gout in his stomach. Whilst relating these particulars, the physician passed them. Williams attended him to his carriage, and inquired what hopes he had of his patient. "Not any," was the reply; "he might linger a few days, but beyond that period it was almost impossible for him to survive."

Henrietta acquainted Adelaide with the joyful intelligence that Major Williams was in the house. The sisters left his Lordship for a few minutes, and joined him in the parlour.

parlour. But when Adelaide entered, pale, trembling, and emaciated, Williams, though prepared by Henrietta to expect a very great alteration in her appearance, was not prepared for the change he now beheld, and which grief, sickness, and the fatigue of having attended her father for five nights without scarcely having taken any repose, had produced. He started, and could with difficulty repress either the tear which dimmed his eye, or the execration which had nearly burst from his lips against the cruel author of this change. Adelaide faintly smiled—gave him her hand, (which Williams pressed to his heart, and respectfully kissed) and welcomed him as the friend of Erasmus.

The first idea Williams formed was, that they should immediately return with him to England.—“No, my friend!” said Adelaide, “anxious as I am to again embrace my beloved benefactress—to behold again the friend and brother of my earliest remembrance, we
cannot

cannot leave our father in his present situation, a prey to the bitter remorse which now appears to have just seized him—a few days may probably terminate his existence—and then, if I am able—but, alas! the calamities I have so long and poignantly endured, have worn down my spirits, and I feel as if verging to the grave: here then will I continue, as long as my attendance can contribute to cheer the last moments of my parent's life; for though he certainly has not been quite so affectionate as I could have wished, yet he is entitled to all the duty I can now pay him. The scene became too affecting, and Henrietta left the room to attend her father's bell, and to acquaint him with the circumstance of their meeting with Major Williams. His Lordship expressed a wish to see him; and during the intervals of excruciating pain—said, the physician who was just gone, entertained no hopes of his recovery—wished he could see his sister and Erasmus before he died—was extremely sorry for the past—
And

and at last requested Williams to write to them, in the hope, a letter might reach England, and they arrive before his decease;—if not, he said, he trusted Williams would assure them of his present disposition, and his sincere sorrow for all the afflictions he had occasioned them. He would endeavour, he said, to atone all in his power for the past, by immediately making a more equitable distribution of his property than he had formerly done, and entreated Williams to send to Mr. ——— his attorney for that purpose.

Here Williams left him, to convey to England the joyful tidings that Adelaide was recovered.

Erasmus received this invaluable letter, and flew to communicate to his mother the delightful intelligence, whose raptures at this unexpected, un hoped for discovery, were no less animated than his own. They immediately sat off post for Ireland, and reached
Omagh

Omagh on the fifth day ; but his Lordship had breathed his last some hours before their arrival.

The meeting we shall not attempt to describe, but leave it to the sensibility and feeling of our readers to imagine all that tenderness and affection could dictate upon such a reunion ; and all the sorrow the alteration, but too visible in the health of Adelaide and Henrietta, could produce in the bosom of these affectionate and beloved relatives. But their presence greatly contributed to console the weeping sisters, who had suffered almost as poignantly from the contrition of their father, as they had before done from his ill-treatment.

As soon as they could get his Lordship's remains embalmed, and properly secured for travelling, they all, accompanied by Williams, returned to England ; and in their way through ———, stopped at an inn, where
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by mere accident they heard a circumstance related, which placed the conduct and character of Augusta Devereux, and her mother, though particularly the first, in the most favorable view possible. This, and the renewed arguments of his friend Erasmus, determined Williams, as soon as he could reach the residence of this truly estimable girl, to again endeavour to surmount the scruples which had before induced her to reject his offer. They again met, and Augusta again most decisively, though with every expression of fervent gratitude, declared her *unalterable* resolution never to enter the marriage state. This had such an effect upon the health of Williams, that he was taken ill, and for many weeks confined to his room. The physicians pronounced his recovery hopeless, and endeavoured to prepare his family for the event. To them, who all, so fondly doated upon Mordaunt, the supposition was almost death: they therefore, after consulting Mrs. Inglebert, came to the resolution of personally

personally soliciting Augusta to renounce her determination, and to unite her endeavours with theirs, to save, by this means, if possible, a life so invaluable to them all. After many entreaties, and upon being assured this was really the wish of all his family, she acceded to their desire of paying him a visit, which she did the same day; and when she witnessed the situation to which sickness had reduced him, she consented to remain, and in conjunction with his mother and sister, endeavour to restore him to health. When Mordaunt found this actually to be the case, and by her attentions and affectionate solitudes, which she no longer attempted, or could disguise, was convinced that she did indeed feel an equal regard for him, and that her refusal of his offer had been influenced only by the nicest sense of honour, delicacy, and attention to his reputation in the world—his raptures were indescribable. He rapidly recovered, and resolved no longer to sacrifice to
“THE FORCE OF PREJUDICE,” the happiness,
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Providence, by restoring him to health, and granting to his prayers the object of his most anxious wishes, had again blessed him with the means of enjoying.

Having conducted the principal personages of our drama through a variety of vicissitudes, calculated, it is hoped, to support the cause of virtue, repress vice, and expose prejudice; and in which we have endeavoured to shew the lamentable consequences of even a single deviation from the strict paths of rectitude; it only remains to acquaint the reader with a few further particulars necessarily connected with the foregoing.

Erasmus Inglebert, now Earl of Blissington, by the death of his uncle, became possessed of estates to the amount of 10,000*l.* per annum; is united to the lovely virtuous Adelaide, and, together with their happy parent, they enjoy every felicity life can afford.

Mrs. Devereux also, in consequence of these events, experiences in the society of her children, and the intercourse of friendship, a balm for every former sorrow, and a

happiness as perfect as the nature of sublunary enjoyments will admit, moderated by the recollection of the past.

Lady Henrietta Orlington likewise followed the example of Erasmus and Adelaide, Williams and Augusta, and bestowed her fair self and immense fortune upon the deserving Charles Devereux, who has lately succeeded to the title and estate of the Marquis of —— his Mother's Uncle.

And the worthy Dr. Elderton feels amply recompensed for his steady attachment to his late afflicted friends, not only by the pecuniary advantages the Marquis of —— has since put him into possession of, but also by the regard and attentions shewn him by the joint friends of both families.

Nor are the friendly attentions of the benevolent Sir John and Lady Griffiths confined alone to Mrs. Inglebert, her family, and connections; but are still extended through every department of life, in which they have an opportunity of either exercising the benevolence of their hearts, or the suavity and urbanity of their dispositions.

CONCLUSION.

THE author cannot quit his pen without first submitting a few observations to the reader, upon the moral tendency of his fable; particularly as the foregoing pages are destitute of every ornamental attraction to entitle them to attention, unless their moral tendency is admitted *unexceptionable*, and his wish to lessen the calamities of life, allowed to compensate for the want of superior literary attainments.

Every author cannot command the abilities of a Cumberland; but every author can withhold his pen from recommending vice, or inculcating immorality.

When the present writer took up his pen, it was to answer the purposes avowed in his
preface :

preface: his next consideration was, whether he could not at the same time that he endeavoured to accomplish this end, support the cause of virtue, by calling the attention of his readers to a subject which has long engaged his own.

Soon after Mr. COLQUHOUN published his admirable TREATISE on the *Police of the Metropolis*, the author perused it; and shuddered as he proceeded to find crimes so enormous, and vice arrived at such a degree of perfection. But he could not exclude the agonizing reflection that these were all fellow creatures, accountable hereafter at the bar of the Almighty Judge, for their actions here. The next consideration which presented itself was, whether this *perfection of vice* is all ascribable to the *innate depravity* of the human heart, which the moment it errs, becomes *irreclaimably* vicious:—or whether much of it does not arise out of the *prejudices* of mankind.

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The author was particularly shocked at one part of Mr. COLQUHOUN'S account, in which he states, there are nearly 50,000 unhappy females in this metropolis who subsist wholly, or in part, upon the wages of meretricious intercourse. What a lamentable consideration! Surely then it is a subject not unworthy of the legislator, the moralist, the man of philanthropy, and the man of religion, to investigate, whether some cause, besides *innate depravity*, has not contributed to expose the virtuous part of society to the consequences of such an enormous evil; when their mere support, exclusive of every attendant calamity, must take from the industry of others, upon the smallest computation, nearly *two millions* of money annually.

After much reflection and observation, the author is persuaded he does not hazard an unfounded conjecture, when he says, a very great proportion of the unhappiness of life, and the particular evil here alluded to, is to be
attributed

attributed to the *prejudices of the world*, which, from their unrelenting obstinacy, *compel* an unhappy creature to proceed in vice, having once deviated from the strict paths of rectitude.

These considerations induced the author to introduce the character of Augusta into his performance: as he should suppose some of the above mentioned 50,000 females, must have been at one time as internally pure, and afterwards as anxious to return to the paths of virtue, as he has represented that character; though the strong prejudices of life, may have shut out the hope of ever, like Augusta, being again *respected* in society, or reinstated in the opinion of an Erasmus, willing to accept *repentance* and *amendment*, as an atonement for the past, and as a security for the future: or a man, like Williams, ultimately to reward and cherish the virtue capable of a return.

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But since first attempting the present work, the author has seen remarks in several of the diurnal prints, and in other periodical publications, censuring the *lax morality* of Kotzebue's Plays, particularly his "*Stranger*," and "*Lovers Vows*"—observing, they savoured too much of the philosophy of the "*New School*."—Now as it is possible the same critics may think the like observations may, with equal justice, be extended to his character of Augusta, though totally dissimilar from either, he begs leave to observe, his religious and moral principles are drawn from purer sources than those alluded to; and should any be inclined to question the morality or justice of his story, and its conclusion; he will say, he has been taught these principles from a diligent perusal, among human authorities, of the works of HOADLY and DODDRIDGE; and, from a source still more pure, the sacred pages of HOLY WRIT.

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Ye, then! who are parents, brothers, sisters, guardians, friends, or lovers;—ye who are conscious of the fallability of human judgment, and who expect forgiveness for yourselves of Heaven; remember it is a more godlike principle to *reclaim*, than to *punish*; and that virtue is never half so lovely, as when she tempers MERCY with JUSTICE.

THE END.



